

Disclaimer: I am not JK Rowling, I do not own these characters, I just choose to play with them in my sandbox.

Why this story came about. I have read several Harry/Multiple Girlfriend/wives stories and they all seem to turn to where Harry controls them or pure smut at sometime or another. I want to try to write a story that actually looks at the issues that might arise in a situation like. I will be keeping this T rated, so don't expect lemony scenes. Yes sex in general might be discussed, but it will not be a graphic natured type.

Chapter 1

This Chapter is ONLY A REVIEW OF THE FIRST THREE YEARS. The reviews show that most people don't care for so feel free to skip directly to chapter 2. If you know the books, you're aren't missing anything.

Harry Potter was no ordinary boy, no not a long shot. He was a Wizard who attended Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Even amongst the students who attended the school, he was not ordinary. At the age of one, he became the only person ever to survive the Killing Curse. Not only surviving but at the same time destroying the Dark Wizard who had casts it. He knew nothing of this until his eleventh birthday because he had been forced to live with his muggle (non-magical) aunt and uncle, because the same evening Harry survived, his parents did not. His mother and father had fought to protect Harry, but the Dark Wizard named Voldemort had struck them down with the same curse that Harry survived. His Aunt Petunia (Harry's mother's sister) and Uncle Vernon Dursley hated magic and had done their best to ensure Harry never discovered his abilities. They kept him locked in a cupboard under the steps, their son beat up Harry ever chance he got, all in all, Harry did not have a happy childhood.

On Harry's eleventh birthday a gentle half giant named Hagrid was sent to find Harry and tell him who he really was for he was suppose to start Hogwarts in barely over a month. He found the Dursleys' hiding in a shack on a remote island. Harry was amazed of course to find the truth about his parents. They had not died in a car crash as the Dursley's had told him, but had died at the hands of a Dark Wizard. He found out about Hogwarts and a month later entered the wizarding world where he was famous as the Boy-Who-Lived.

Life at Hogwarts proved to be a challenge also as danger invariably seemed to find Harry. His first year, he and his friend Ron Weasley had defeated a full grown troll, saving the life of Hermione Granger who became their other best friend. The three of them discovered a plot to steal an object from Hogwarts that would allow the Dark Wizard who had killed Harry's parents to return. That Dark wizard, named Voldemort was trying to get the Philosopher's stone which made into an elixir provides endless life or in the case of Voldemort, a body to return to. Over the year, they had to deal with a baby dragon, and a three headed monstrous dog. In their desire to save the stone from Voldemort, that had to get past plants and gigantic chess pieces that tried to kill them, potions that might poison them and finally Harry had come face to face with Voldemort himself, and drove him off saving the stone. It was also during this first year; Harry discovered Quidditch the wizarding world's favorite sport. Played on Broomsticks on a large pitch, the game had balls called bludgers that tried to knock you off your broom and another one called a quaffle that you scored with, and finally the one Harry was most concerned with the Golden Snitch. He played seeker on his team, the youngest school quidditch player in over 100 years. His job as seeker was to find the snitch and catch it. It was the most demanding and prestigious position on the team. During his first flying lesson, Harry had discovered he had a natural broom riding ability, which led directly to him having the quidditch position.

After that first year, Harry had returned to the Dursley's where he was once again mistreated and abused. His school stuff was locked away from him and his owl (a present from Hagrid, whose name was Hedwig) wasn't allowed to leave her cage. He spent a miserable summer up to his birthday when a well intending but misguided House-Elf named Dobby had tried to prevent Harry from returning to Hogwarts. That led to his Uncle locking Harry in his room with bars on his window. If it had not been for Ron and his twin brothers, Fred and George stealing their father's flying car and rescuing Harry he still might be there. Harry had spent the rest of the summer with the Weasley's at their home. Called the Burrow it was the most unique home he had ever seen, mainly because it was magical. A goblin in the attic, live garden gnomes and a family who actually cared what happened to Harry. There was also Ginny, Ron's little sister who had a crush on Harry for years. Anytime Harry entered a room where she was, she would knock something over or rush out of the

room blushing. The final month of the summer vacation was the best Harry had ever had.

On the day there were suppose to go back to Hogwarts, Harry and Ron were the last two that were to cross the magical barrier to platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ where the hogwart's express steam train was waiting. When the barrier would not let them enter and they realized the train had left without them, the two boys took Mr. Weasley's flying car and flew it to Hogwarts only to crash land it in a Womping Willow, a nasty tree whose branches hit back. This led to another eventful year including people being petrified by something unknown, Harry hearing strange voices in the walls, messages about a chamber of secrets been opened and coming face to face with gigantic spiders in the forbidden forest. Near the end of the year, Ginny had been taken into the Chamber of Secrets with a message written that she would die there. Ron and Harry found the location to the Chamber and made their way to it. Through the actions of an imbecilic professor the two were separated and Harry had entered the Chamber by himself. He ended up killing a sixty foot Basilisk and a likeness of Lord Voldemort saving Ginny's life.

During Harry's third year at Hogwarts, he had come face to face with Dementors, the guards of the Wizard prison Azkaban. The soulless foul creatures had the ability to suck all happy memories from a person leaving him with his worst thoughts. In Harry's case that left him with the memories of his parents being killed. He could hear his father telling his mother to run, his mother begging for Harry's life and both being killed. To combat the Dementors Harry had learned a powerful spell called the Patronus Charm. It creates a silvery creature that drives away Dementors. For a boy of thirteen to be able to produce such a charm was remarkable indeed. There was another issue that happened in this third year, and that was to find out a mass murderer was trying to kill Harry. The murderer named Sirius Black was the one who betrayed Harry's parents to Voldemort and was Harry's godfather. When the two finally met face to face, Harry had discovered that Sirius was not guilty of the crime, but another friend of his father had betrayed them, that was who Sirius was trying to kill. Peter Pettigrew was an animagus (a wizard who could turn into an animal form) and had been living as Ron Weasley's rat. When he was discovered, Sirius and another of Harry's father's friend name Remus Lupin were going to kill him. Harry had prevented them from doing so, as he did not want Sirius to have to go back to Azkaban. On trying to return to the castle

Remus who just happened to be a werewolf transformed allowing Pettigrew to escape and almost causing the death of Sirius and Harry at the hands of the Dementors. Not sure exactly how he had survived the dementor attack, Harry had awoken in the Hospital wing to discover no one believed Sirius to be innocent. Harry and Hermione went back in time and saved both Sirius' life and the life of an innocent Hippogriff named Buckbeak.

Finally it is his fourth year at Hogwarts, after a vivid nightmare involving Voldemort, the World Quidditch championship match and Death Eaters (those who supported Voldemort) rampaging through the campsite after the World Cup Harry had arrived back at Hogwarts. He quickly discovered that the Hogwarts campus would play host to the Tri-Wizard tournament, a competition between the magical schools, and the other schools would be arriving shortly.

Ok that is the prologue...time for the real story.

Chapter 2

Fleur Delacour, first in her class at Beauxbatons, part Veela (which is a magical creature with the ability to seduce men and when enraged turns avian and can cast fire) first noticed the raven hair younger man during the first evening at Hogwarts. She and her classmates from Beauxbaton were sitting at the Ravenclaw table. When they ran out of bouillabaisse, Fleur saw that at the next table was a whole bowl being ignored. She made her way over to the table and asked "Excuse me, are you wanting ze bouillabaisse?". The red haired boy did what all boys do when they see her, his mouth dropped open, his faced turned purple and just stared, but the boy next to him, those eyes, those deep emerald eyes, he was of course much younger than she so he was but a boy, but those eyes and her allure had no effect on him. He just pushed the dish toward Fleur saying "Yeah have it."

Fleur found herself looking at him every so often, and when she asked a Ravenclaw she found out that was Harry Potter, the boy-who-lived. Her sister Gabrielle would want to know. She had read all of the books about Harry Potter and had a crush on the young man.

When Fleur had been selected as the Beauxbatons' Champion, though she had expected to be it was still one of the most exciting moments of her life. She had entered the chamber behind the head table right behind Victor Krum, followed shortly by the Hogwart's champion Cedric Diggory. As they stood apart, each thinking of what might lie ahead, the door had opened and the raven haired boy with those green eyes had entered looking at the three of them. Obviously Dumbledore had sent his famous pupil to deliver a message.

What is it?" she had said. "Do zey want us back in ze Hall?"

He had just stood there looking at them; nervousness had run through his eyes. Then that ridiculous Ludo Bagman had said he was to be the fourth champion. Fleur had argued that Harry was too young, and a bit later she had called him a little boy (but truthfully that was because he was only a year older than her little sister and to Fleur she was still a little girl). The look of anger that swept through his eyes at being called a little boy was not the look of a fourteen year old. Harry denied putting his name in the Goblet of course, but of course anyone would want to win for the honor and

money. Oh how was she going to tell Gabrielle her famous Harry Potter was liar and a cheat? Finally the man called Moody had come in and suggested that someone put Harry's name in the cup so try to get him killed. That was ridiculous wasn't it? But he did make a good point, why did the goblet allow two champions from the same school. She looked at Harry again. The nervousness was back in those emerald eyes, but so was something else, determination.

Fleur did not think about Harry again until the champions had been gathered for the weighing of the wands. Fleur was proud of her wand and her grandmother, and when that Mr. Ollivander said Veela hair made temperamental wands she was quite upset, enough to glare at Harry when he had been trying to polish fingerprints off his wand. She could see Harry was uncomfortable with the pictures but kept getting pulled into the front by the Skeeter woman. Fleur was conflicted by the next morning's Daily Prophet story with what had actually occurred. Why did they not mention Cedric? Was the publicity surrounding Harry Potter his doing?

Then the evening that Madame Maxine had come back to the Beauxbatons's carriage and told her that the first event was going to be getting past dragons. All Fleur could think was "DRAGONS? And that was the first event?" But later she also thought "How could they let Harry go against Dragons, he is much too young?" She and Madame Maxine spent several evening discussing the best way to deal with a dragon. Fleur really hadn't wanted Madame's help, but Madame Maxine had kept saying it was for school honor.

When the day of the first event had arrived, Fleur had been petrified. The best strategy she had come up with was to try to charm the dragon to sleep. Being part Veela made her persuasive charms much more effective. When Bagman had held out the bag and said ladies first, Fleur's hand had shook so badly it took a couple of grasps before she was able to pick up one of the squirming figures. Welsh Green, at least she didn't have to deal with the Hungarian Horntail she had thought for Madame Maxine had told her which dragons were involved. She saw Krum pull out the Chinese Fireball, and then Cedric had pull out the Swedish Short snout. Fleur had known what was left, and as she looked at Harry she realized he did too. She saw his green eyes stare at the bag and slowly he reached in and pulled out the Hungarian Horntail, and she was shocked, no hint of panic, nothing but the determination in those deep emerald

eyes. "Who is this boy?" She thought. "Doesn't he realize what he is about to have to do?"

Cedric had gone first, Fleur heard the commentary;"Oooh, narrow miss there, very narrow". . . "He's taking risks, this one!". . . "Clever move - pity it didn't work!" and finally the crowd roared, so Cedric had succeeded. It now was her turn. Though she trembled from head to foot, she would not let her school down, she gave a quick glance over at Krum who was looking at the ground and then over at Harry, whose eyes were on her. Was the concern in his eyes for her? It seemed like the split second their eyes met and he gave her a little smile, she felt a warmth spread and her fear subsided. By then Harry had turned away and never saw the small smile that cross Fleur's face when she looked at him. She lifted her head up high and followed the path to the Arena.

When Fleur had entered the stadium, still confused about the look in the boy's eyes, the smile and the warmth that she felt, but the sight of a fully grown Welsh Green Dragon standing at the other end brought her fully back into her attention. She could see the golden egg sitting amongst the other eggs. The dragon was between her and the eggs. Fleur worked herself closer to the dragon, transfiguring objects to hide behind; finally she got close enough to start a complicated sleeping charm. Once it was cast, she saw the dragon close an eye, but stayed standing, she cast the same spell again and the dragon finally laid down looking sleepy. She crept out slowly headed, keeping an eye on the dragon's eyes for any hint of it being awake. Just as she came abreast of the snout, the dragon let out a mighty

Snore, launching a jet of flames directly at her. She had ducked but her skirt had caught on fire. Quietly she extinguished the flames, grabbed the egg and dashed away.

Madame Maxine and Madam Pomfrey the Hogwarts healer forced her to go the medical tent to be checked over. She assured them she was fine, and showed them that she had not been burned. Fleur really wanted to see Harry going against the Horntail. She was really afraid for him. By the time she made it to a seat, Krum had already blinded his dragon but had to wait until it finished stomping around before he could grab his egg and complete the task.

The dragon trainers had gotten the Horntail in position and Harry Potter had walked into the arena. He looked so small, and the Horntail looked very vicious. Harry had put his wand up in the air and shouted something Fleur had not heard. She saw Harry wait, but could not see what the spell had done. "I knew he was too young, and didn't know what to do." She thought. "I hope he doesn't do anything stupid." But then she heard a whistling in the air and saw a broom had come hurdling up to Harry and stop. Harry clambered onto the broom and in an instant she saw the most miraculous thing, Harry Potter on a broom. She had been to professional Quidditch matches and had never seen such flying. Once Harry flew very near her seat, and he glanced at her, and she didn't see a single bit of fear on his face, he had a smile on his face and those eyes were dancing in fun. The Hungarian Horntail had grazed Harry with his tail, a long cut appeared on Harry's shoulder but he didn't seem to notice. He had continued flying around until with a quick dive the egg was in Harry's hand and it was over. Fleur found herself jumping up and down and crying with glee, and when Harry's score was posted she even voiced her own displeasure at Karkaroff's score.

Fleur found herself writing weekly to her sister, telling her about Hogwarts and telling her about Harry's incredible flying. Because of her sister constantly asking about him, Fleur found herself asking Cedric and another boy she met, Roger Davies about him. They told her of how Harry had faced the spirit of Voldemort when he was a first year saving the philosopher's stone keeping Voldemort from returning. How he had found the chamber of secrets during his second year killing a thousand year old Basilisk with only a sword. She also found out he had learned to do a fully corporal Patronus the previous year. Fleur was amazed, she still couldn't produce one. When she had exclaimed to Madame Maxine that the stories must be exaggerations, her own Headmistress had told her that the stories were actually not even close to what had actually occurred. Dumbledore had confided in Madame Maxine to the extent of what Harry had done. How each time Harry did something he didn't want any of the glory. Finally he had confided to Maxine that one of Harry's favorite people was actually a werewolf. That Harry loved all creatures, he was friends with a half giant, personally knew a centaur, and that he had personally risked himself in helping a mistreated house-elf be free. And once again Fleur found herself writing to her sister about Harry Potter.

Fleur had finally grown tired of all the boys of Hogwarts asking her to the Yule Ball that she finally suggested to Roger Davies that they go together. When the Champions had gathered for their entrance, Fleur glanced at Harry and his partner. The beauxbaton champion noticed Harry's date was attractive, and Fleur even felt a slight bit of jealousy, if he were just a couple of years older she thought to herself. She had glanced into his emerald eyes again, he was definitely cute. He was so innocent. Her own date's inability to keep his mouth from drooling over her was a constant irritant. She found her temper flaring causing her to criticize everything around her. After the meal the dancing had begun, she glanced at Harry and smiled when she saw who was leading the dance. She could tell he wasn't enjoying himself.

Later in the evening, Davies convinced Fleur to go for a walk with him. She knew what was coming. He would walk her to a secluded place and then try to kiss her. She knew what he was thinking. She knew that Roger was only looking at her beauty and nothing beyond. But he had been nice this evening. She would let him kiss her, but that was as far as it would go. They ended up behind a rosebush but they had only been there a short time when she heard her Headmistress yelling something. Thinking she was yelling at her, she stumbled out from behind the bush and saw Madame Maxine was stomping away from that Hagrid toward the carriage. This gave Fleur the opening she needed and she begged off the rest of the evening from Roger saying she wanted to go see what was wrong with her Headmistress.

The second task was approaching and Fleur still didn't know what the clue meant, one day in mid January she was carrying her egg, talking with Cedric. He had been asking about Veelas and their powers. He had asked if it was true that she could persuade men to do what she wanted. Up to that point Cedric had been one of the few to not trip over his feet every time he saw her. His distraction with his girlfriend Cho Chang seemed to prevent it. She explained she could elevate her allure and captivate most men, but it was something she found most disgusting. "Prove it." Cedric had said as he nodded at her egg and said, "I know the next clue, see if you can get it out of me."

Fleur took Cedric up on the challenge. She took him to a classroom where no one else was around closed the door. Though she felt guilty, she looked Cedric in the eyes and radiated her powers, to

Cedric it seemed like Fleur was glowing and that was all he remembered until a few seconds later, when everything seemed to return to normal. He had looked at her and smiled, "Didn't work?" He had asked.

Fleur gave him a smile in return, "I'll hear what the egg says if I hold it under the water."

Diggory's mouth dropped. "But I, I didn't tell you, did I?" He asked unbelievably, then realizing that he had, he said, "Well that at least makes three of us, I told Harry also?"

"Why did you do that?" Fleur had asked.

"He was the one who told me about the Dragons, damn glad he did. There would have been no way for me to have finished that."

"Why did he tell you about the Dragons? Seems to be it would have been to his advantage to not tell you." Fleur had asked.

"Well that's Harry for you, he seemed to know you and Victor knew about them already and he said he only thought it was fair for me to know."

Again Fleur had found herself writing to Gabrielle about Harry Potter. How cute he had been at the Yule Ball, how he seemed not to like to dance, and how he always seemed to do what was right. Fleur was glad she had never told Gabrielle that she thought Harry had lied and cheated to get into the Tri-Wizard Tournament. There is no way that boy could do such a thing. "But who did it? And why?" she started asking herself.

The return letter from Gabrielle a few days later shocked her. Gabrielle had found out her father was coming to watch the second event and she had begged and pleaded with him to bring her. She convinced him that she would keep up with her schoolwork, since she already attended Beauxbaton, Madame Maxine could ensure she attended to her work and that she really wanted to meet Harry Potter. This might be her once in a lifetime chance to do it. As with all fathers, he gave in to his youngest daughter and agreed.

Fleur had listened to the song as it came from the bath water:

"Come seek us where our voices sound,
We cannot sing above the ground,
And while you're searching, ponder this:
We've taken what you'll sorely miss,
An hour long you'll have to look,
And to recover what we took,
But past an hour- the prospect's black,
Too late, it's gone, it won't come back"

She had worked out the merpeople and she had to go underwater for an hour, but what was she going to be looking for. "What would she sorely miss?" Fleur had pondered. Finding the bubblehead charm wasn't too difficult, though she was concerned about two things, the first being the charm only lasted about one hour so she couldn't go over the time limit and the other was being part Veela, a creature of fire, her magical abilities would be greatly diminished underwater.

On the afternoon of February twenty-third, the day before the event, her father and Gabrielle had arrived. Fleur had missed her sister greatly, and it brightened her heart to see her. But before she could sit down and talk to them she was called to the Hogwart's Headmaster's office. He had a chat with her and in the middle of the conversation she had mentioned how her father and sister had just arrived and how much she loved her sister. Dumbledore had asked about how she and Roger Davies were getting along, since he had taken her to the Yule Ball. Fleur made it abundantly clear there was no relationship. This surprised Dumbledore, and he looked like he was reconsidering something. Later that evening after Fleur had promised Gabrielle to introduce her to Harry the next day after the event, Gabrielle and her father were asked to go to the Hogwart's headmaster's office. Fleur didn't know what was going on. Neither of them came back that evening. After a restless night, she went for breakfast and still her sister did not join her. She arrived for the second event well before the scheduled start time; she searched the stands for her sister and father. She noticed her father looking at the

water with a grim look on his face but he looked at Fleur and smiled, but she still didn't see Gabrielle anywhere.

Ten minutes prior to the event, Fleur, Cedric and Victor were being addressed at the Judges table, Fleur looked around, but Harry was not there. Headmaster Dumbledore kept looking toward the path to the castle. Fleur presumed Harry was late for a reason and would be there shortly. Bagman started their instructions, the item sorely missed was the person at Hogwarts they cared the most for. Cho Chang was Cedric's, Hermione Granger for Victor, Ron Weasley for Harry (Fleur had a brief thought, did this mean that Harry didn't have a girlfriend), and Gabrielle Delacour for her. When Fleur heard that Gabrielle was being held she could only think of the song, "It won't come back." And a wave of panic swept over her, "but of course they wouldn't allow them to be hurt, would they?"

With only a minute before the start time, Fleur heard a murmur start in the crowd, and she looked up to see Harry running down the path as fast as he could, stopping only when he was at the judges table. She heard a pompous voice asked him where he had been. Bagman set them apart and then a minute later "one...two..three..." and the whistle blew. Fleur looked at Harry who had waded into the water without even drawing his wand, she saw him take something out of his pocket and start eating it, but she didn't have time to think of what he was doing though as she thought of Gabrielle, and quickly cast a warming spell on herself and the bubblehead charm and dove into the water.

A/N yeah this was rushed and not well formatted, but wanted to setup a few things and then get to the real story.

Chapter 3

Fleur presumed the Merpeople lived toward the center of the lake allowing them to be as far away from human contact as possible. She swam in that direction, but she really hadn't thought about how far that was. Fleur was an excellent swimmer. Her parent's home was on the Mediterranean Sea and she swam all the time during the summer, but this was different. She was racing a clock and racing to save her sister. She found her energy levels dropping rapidly as she swam further and further into the lake. Deeper under the water she swam. The Air bubble around her head kept a constant pressure, so she didn't suffer from the pressure in her ears she normally would when she dove deep at home. The problem she discovered with the bubblehead charm was she couldn't hear anything in the water. Her first indication of a problem was when she was grabbed around her ankle. A grindylow had attacked her, and another. She pulled her wand out and cast a spell but her magic was far weaker under the water and as she would get one off, another would grab on. "Gabrielle, Gabrielle" Fleur kept thinking, "I must get to Gabrielle." Under attack, Fleur wasn't even thinking of the Tri-Wizard Tournament or winning anymore, she was wanted to get to her sister and make sure she was safe.

From the darkness she saw a shape forming and then saw a rush of water go past her. The jet of water hit several of the Grindylows that were surrounding her, another and another until the Grindylows had released her and moved away. Fleur looked at the shape and even in the dark murky water, she saw those emerald eyes, it was Harry. He seemed to have gills on the side of his neck and his hands were webbed, "of course, Gillyweed, why hadn't I thought of that?" She thought and then looked again at her rescuer, he was smiling, not the smile of a boy or man who was under her beauty charm but actual warmth, of friendship. Then with a shrug, Harry indicated she should head on toward the center of the lake. "Why would he do that?" Fleur wondered, again looking at the boy. "He could have left me and been ahead in this competition also."

They swam together for some time, Fleur knew that with Harry's webbed feet and hands he could have easily out swam her, but he kept to the same speed as she, looking around as he swam for more grindylows. Then a ghost of a girl appeared, Fleur couldn't hear her but it seems like she asked Harry how he was doing as if she and Harry talked all the time. Fleur could see the ghost point in a

direction. Harry gave the ghost a thumbs up and touching Fleur's arm indicated she could lead the way in that direction. When Harry's fingers had touched her arm she felt a warmth that had nothing to do with her warming spell radiate from the spot, and again she looked into his emerald eyes wondering what was there and she continued on with Harry swimming next to her, and finally they came to the village.

The merpeople were lining the street, with more singing in the center of the village. When they made it there, Fleur could see all of the hostages were in a row tied by weed ropes. She quickly swam over to Gabrielle and saw she was in a magical slumber. She tried a spell to break the ropes of weeds holding her, but the spell was far too weak to do damage. Harry was arguing with a merman trying to get his spear, finally she saw him grab a rock and start hacking at the ropes around his hostage. Following his lead, Fleur searched for a rock also. As she found one and started pounding on Gabrielle's ropes, Harry had freed Ron and now swam over to help. He reached for her hand to pause her downswing and once again when their hands touched she felt that warmth again. Harry had taken his own rock and quickly finished cutting the ropes around Gabrielle. Fleur smiled at Harry and quickly started pulling Gabrielle toward the surface, but looking back she could see Harry hadn't followed her. He was trying to take Cedric's and Krum's hostage as well. "What is he doing?" She thought. She knew the time must be up soon, she knew the gillyweed only lasted an hour as well. "They have to hurry." She thought again and started to swim again, but once again she looked back and saw Harry was still with the other hostages. Fleur realized Harry wouldn't leave anyone behind and for some reason she couldn't, no she wouldn't leave Harry behind and she swam back next to him. Suddenly Cedric came into view he pulled out a knife and made quick work on the black haired girl's ropes and pulled her away, and then there was Krum who had sort of transfigured himself into a shark, he bit the ropes in one bite and pulled the brown haired girl along with him and they were gone. Harry looked at Fleur and with a shrug he offered to let her lead again. With a smile of her own she swam ahead pulling Gabrielle with her. Again Fleur knew Harry could have out swam her but he was staying right with her with his wand out in one hand and pulling his hostage with the other.

As they were getting near to the surface Fleur felt Gabrielle lurch in her arms, looking down she saw her sisters eyes open and she

started to glow. "NO" Fleur thought in panic, "she can't be going through transformation now." Gabrielle's body started grow, her legs, arms, body grew to longer lengths. The robes she was wearing were in shreds. Gabrielle's eyes widened in panic as she realized she was underwater and couldn't breathe while at the same time a swarm of Grindylow appeared and started attacking again. Harry had seen Fleur's hostage, who looked like a nine year old girl start to glow as Fleur pulled her up toward the surface, saw Gabrielle's body transform into that of a young woman, and then saw her eyes open and start to struggle in panic. Harry quickly looked at Ron to make sure he was still asleep. Then Harry saw the Grindylows attack, saw them start to pull Fleur and her hostage back toward the bottom. He saw the air bubble around Fleur's head vanish. He looked around to see if there was any help and seeing none, he shoved Ron toward the surface and swam toward the Fleur. As he was nearing them, Harry felt his gills start to disappear, and his hands started losing their webbing and he could no longer breathe. With his last remaining breaths he spelled 'Relashio' several time driving off the Grindylows. Harry grabbed Fleur and her hostage and started kicking toward the surface. Fleur kicked with her legs also. Harry felt his lungs were bursting, his leg muscles were tightening, he looked at Fleur who was looking at him, even in the terror he could see in her bright blue eyes, they reflected something else, and he felt a renewed energy. As they neared the surface of the lake he could see Ron had broken the surface and must have woken up as he was swimming toward the stands. Harry looked down at Fleur's hostage who had stopped struggling; the girl who had miraculously transformed in front of his eyes was no conscious.

They broke the surface of the water, gasping for breath. Harry could see Fleur was looking at the young girl and she started screaming "Gabrielle, Gabrielle". Harry looked around; they had surfaced fifty yards from the platform, he looked at Gabrielle, and realized she wasn't breathing. He didn't know if he could do it, didn't even know if it would work on a person, but he pulled out his wand, pointed it at Gabrielle and with a swish and flick yelled, "Wingardium Leviosa" and the young lady lifted out of the water started floating he urged her toward the platform but could feel his magical energy draining, he wasn't going to get her there, but then he felt the energy drain lessen and looking at the platform he saw Professor Dumbledore with his wand out aimed at Gabrielle and he was pulling her toward him. He looked at Fleur whose eyes were following Gabrielle all the way to the platform. Harry looked back that way also and saw

Madame Pomfrey hurrying to her side. He turned back to Fleur again and said, "Let's go see how she is." And they swam toward the platform. The water was frigidly cold, and every stroke felt like an eternity, but every time he turned his head toward Fleur she was looking at him. In her eyes he could see a look of concern, of tiredness, but she still had a smile for Harry. When they made it to the platform and pulled themselves up, they were surrounded by people putting blankets around them and handing them cups of hot liquid. Dumbledore himself casts warming spell around both of them, but they only had eyes for the young lady who arrived before them. Madame Pomfrey was still kneeling beside her, but they heard Gabrielle coughing and sputtering, and knew she was alive. Harry and Fleur went over to her and Fleur knelt down beside her and taking the young lady's hand she said "How are you Gabrielle?"

Gabrielle looked at her sister "What happened?" She asked weakly.

"My little sister grew up, you transformed Gabrielle. You are now a young lady." Fleur said with tears in her eyes. "But we were underwater, and then we were attacked and I couldn't get you to the surface."

"But 'ow—?" Gabrielle started, and then saw the dark hair young man beside her sister. Her eyes widened and she started "You are—"

" 'e saved our lives Gabrielle. I, I owe 'im my life and yours." Fleur turned back to Harry and in a much huskier voice than she normally spoke said "You saved my life, and my sisters'." At the same time Gabrielle's eyes widened and she started "Non Fleur, 'e's mine" they both said at the same time "For my life I owe you everything, I name you my bondmate." Fleur's lips touched Harry's while Gabrielle had grabbed Harry's hand and kissed it. Harry felt a rush of power overwhelm his senses. He sensed warmth, a brilliant light, he saw two beautiful birds flying into the air surrounded by fire, and then he passed out.

When Harry awoke he found himself in a very familiar spot, Hogwarts hospital wing. Harry had spent many of his nights in this room over the last three and a half years. He tried to remember what had happened. Harry remembered the lake; he remembered helping Fleur and saving Ron and saving Fleur and Gabrielle. He remembered being kissed by Fleur and Gabrielle, the birds blazing

in fire and that was all he could remember. Harry's whole body ached but he felt so alive.

"Oh Mr. Potter I'm so glad you are awake." Madame Pomfrey came over to his bed and started waving her wand and uttering spell after spell. Her wand would glow with various colors until finally, "All looks well Mr. Potter. The Headmaster asked to be notified upon your awakening. I shall return soon." And she hastened out of the hospital wing. Harry looked around and saw Fleur and Gabrielle on a bed on either side of him. He looked at Fleur he silver hair blazing on the white pillow, her skin aglow, and her lips with smile upon them. He noticed she no longer had the haughty look she possessed when he first saw her. Harry looked at Gabrielle, and could see the same silvery hair, though not quite as long. Her skin also was aglow and she also seemed to be smiling in her sleep. "What happened to her?" He wondered. "She changed from a small child into this young lady in front of my eyes."

"Why those beds?" He thought, usually Madame Pomfrey separated the injured girls from the boys. "Were they were waiting for him to wake up and just fell asleep?" He wondered. "That would be nice, but they didn't need to do that."

At that moment Professor Dumbledore walked into the wing, "Ah, Harry. I see you are feeling better."

"Yes professor, but what happened?" Harry asked.

"Ah yes, make yourself comfortable Harry for we have much to discuss. We have a" Dumbledore looked out a window and then back at Harry, "unique problem and we must figure out what you want to do."

Harry sat back down on the bed and looked at the aged wizard in front of him. He could see from Dumbledore's blue eyes that something was troubling him greatly. "Do about what sir?"

"Harry, do you know what a Veela is?" Dumbledore asked.

"Yes sir, I saw them at the World Cup." Harry responded.

"And you saw their magic?" Dumbledore asked.

Harry remembered how he was ready to jump out of the top box at the World Cup when they were dancing. "Sort of sir, they can make men well uh do things and they can turn into bird form and throw fireballs."

"Mostly correct Harry. Did you know Miss Delacour was part Veela?"

"She mentioned at the wands thing that her grandmother was Veela." Harry said.

"Ah, yes. She is a quarter Veela as is her sister Gabrielle." Said Dumbledore and with a nod he gestured at the girl in the other bed.

"Sir, what happened to Gabrielle? When we first got to the hostages, she looked like a child, but as we were swimming to the surface, she glowed and well grew up." Harry asked.

"Well Harry," Dumbledore started. "That is part of the Veela in her. A Veela will stop growing at a young age until her mind and body is ready for the stress of, shall we say womanhood."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"One of the, hm, shall we say virtues of a Veela is their tempers."

Harry remembered the World cup and how the Veela acted when things didn't go their team's way and he just nodded."

"Well having the power of the Veela in a young woman who is going through the, umm, changes a woman undergoes as she grows" Dumbledore looked at a wall "Well nature has decided that would be unwise. So they stop growing while their minds and body undergo those changes and then transform when the time is right."

Harry didn't quite understand what Dumbledore meant but left it at that. "But sir what does Fleur and Gabrielle being Veela have to do with me?"

"Ah, well that is the difficult part Harry. Let me ask you, what happened in the lake and please I need every detail when it comes to you and Miss Delacour."

Harry started with his story, how after taking the gillyweed, he had swam toward the center of the lake and how he had come across Fleur struggling with the Grindylows. He explained how he had assisted her and at that he stopped and asked. "Professor, they were simple spells, why wasn't Fleur able to do them?"

"Fleur's magic is a combination of Veela and wizarding power Harry." Dumbledore started, "What do you remember most vividly about the Veela." Then with a small chuckle at the look on Harry's face. "Besides their beauty?"

Harry thought of the Veela at the World Cup, "The fire"

"Exactly. Veela magic is born in fire very much like the phoenix. When she was deep underwater she mentally was unable to call for the fire part of her magic and it left her magic much weaker." Dumbledore started. "That doesn't mean she isn't able to, if she were to go into the water and practice, she would eventually be able to pull only from her witch's power and it would be effective. But she probably has never needed to. Now back to that delightful tale."

Harry continued, telling Dumbledore about how he had swam with her to protect her in case of more grindylow attacks,

"Noble as always Harry."

Harry continued telling about getting to the village and getting Ron and helping Fleur with Gabrielle. How he had waited for Cedric and Krum to get Cho and Hermione before leaving.

"We heard that part from the merpeople, again noble, though you might hear differently from some of your classmates."

Harry told Dumbledore how Fleur had come back to be with him after she had first started swimming away with Gabrielle, when she realized what Harry was waiting for. Dumbledore was most intrigued that Fleur had returned to Harry's side instead of continuing on.

"I don't know why she did sir. I just couldn't leave Hermione or Cho there."

"Yes and I'm sure if Fleur hadn't been with you, you would have made sure Gabrielle was safe as well, wouldn't you Harry?"

Harry thought of that, "Yes sir, I would have."

Harry continued telling Dumbledore how, once Krum and Cedric had claimed their hostages he once again swam protection for Fleur to make sure she got to the surface safely. He explained how he saw Gabrielle start to glow, how the bubblehead charm had failed and the grindylows attacked again. Harry explained that he pushed Ron up and swam to help but his gillyweed expired. That he used his last air to send the spells that drove off the grindylow then helped Fleur get Gabrielle to the surface. Then remembering how Dumbledore had taken Gabrielle from his spell, "Sir, thank you for saving Gabrielle, I couldn't hold the levitation any longer."

"Harry, I didn't save her, you did. You saved both Fleur's and Gabrielle's life while risking your own in doing so." Dumbledore said quietly, he looked again at the ladies on the beds beside Harry, "We thought we had enough safeguards in place. I just never thought about a Veela transformation at that time." A tear crept down Dumbledore's nose. "The transformation knocked her out of the spell she was under, and without you, Gabrielle would have died and Fleur would have also. Harry, do you remember what happened when you got to the platform?"

"We went to see how Gabrielle was; I didn't think she was breathing when we surfaced." Harry started.

"Yes, though she wasn't breathing at first, Madame Pomfrey did her usual magic and brought her around in no time. What else do you remember?"

"Fleur said something and Gabrielle also." Harry said and then blushing "They both kissed me, but when they did I felt something and I saw two bird surrounded by fire or at least I thought I did, and the next thing I remember was waking up here."

"Do you remember what they said?" Dumbledore asked.

"Something about life and they owe me."

"Yes, they both invoked deep Veela magic." Dumbledore stopped and again looked at the unconscious forms of Fleur and Gabrielle. "They initiated a mating bond with you Harry."

"What is that sir?" Harry asked but had a horrible feeling he really didn't want to know.

"Ah, well Harry think of it as a Veela wedding vows."

"Wedding vows? I'm married? How—?" Harry started.

"Maybe that was a bad comparison. No you're not married, at least not if you don't want to be." Dumbledore started, but seeing Harry let out a sigh of relief, "it's much deeper than marriage, at least for them."

"WHAT?"

"Harry, they connected their lives to you. In Veela terms it is called a bondmate." Dumbledore said. "Now you can reject the bonding but there would be consequences."

"What kind of consequences?" Harry said quietly.

"Nothing on your part, but the Delacours, well, Harry you have to understand they have given you their love." Dumbledore said. "If you reject it, and not complete the bond, it disappears and those two ladies will never be the same."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore again looked sadly at the Delacours, "the bond is formed from the Veela magic from every ounce of love in their hearts. If you accept it, the love will be freely shared amongst all of you, but if you reject it, they will live the rest of their lives with no way to love again. That usually means they will go insane or worse."

"But why did they do it?" Harry asked.

"You saved their lives Harry," Dumbledore said. "But I will tell you this; they each had already found love in their hearts for you before they committed themselves to you."

"They loved me?" Harry asked.

"The bond cannot be formed out of nothing, there must be love for the individual before it can start. The love might not have been deep or it might have been from the depths of their hearts but it was there."

Harry looked at Fleur, "She didn't even know I existed, I was just a little boy to her. How did she love me?"

"I can't answer that Harry, if you accept the bond I'm sure she will be glad to tell you. For you will have no secrets from her, and she will have none from you." Dumbledore said.

"What do you mean?"

"I was researching this bond while waiting for you to awake. Part of its nature is the ability to communicate silently."

"They'll be able to read my mind?"

"More like your thoughts, unless you are actively thinking something it would not work. They couldn't just go dive into your memories."

"Oh." Harry said.

"Professor, um" Harry started. "What do I do?"

"That is entirely up to you Harry? But your options are simple enough. You can accept both bondings and share your life with two very lovely young ladies." Seeing the look in Harry's eyes, "Yes, since the bond is permanent you would eventually probably marry them both."

"How can I marry both of them sir, isn't that, well against the law."

"In normal circumstances, yes Harry." Dumbledore said. "But this is a magical bond and as such recognized by all as a justifiable exception to the law. Now your other option is to only accept one of the bonds, in which you would condemn the other to the life of insanity I mentioned earlier. Though this is an option, the results of such a choice would most likely create an undesirable problem with the bond with the other one, not to mention their family. And finally you can reject both bonds, live your life as you want and both women would be as I mentioned earlier."

"I have no choice then sir." Harry said.

"You always have a choice, but sometimes the choices are not always equal."

"Are they sleeping or unconscious?" Harry asked

"We had to put them in a deep sleep until you awakened Harry." Dumbledore said, "Usually the bond must be formed within forty eight hours of its initiation, and we had no idea when you would awake. Not even the strongest of Madame Pomfrey's restorative potions could bring you around. It seems in your weakened magical state, the energy from the dual bond initiation overwhelmed your body and magical core."

"How long have I been unconscious?"

"Three days, and no before you ask, the bond formation will not continue until the ladies awake." Dumbledore said. "But we cannot keep them out for more than another two days."

"So I can talk to them, before the bond?" Harry asked. "I mean I have never even spoken to Gabrielle and now I have to decide if I want to spend the rest of my life with her?"

"Of course Harry. But before we bring the ladies around, may I suggest speaking to the lady's parents and maybe to a certain canine we are both fond of?"

"Uh, how about just Si..I mean padfoot. I think I would prefer to speak to uh, them" nodding to the beds beside him, "before talking to their parents." Harry replied.

A twinkle emerged in Dumbledore's eyes, "Yes, meeting the girlfriend's parents can be quite daunting especially when you didn't even know you had a girlfriend. But understand they are very much concerned for their children. They know you have their daughter's lives in your hand."

"Yes sir, I understand."

"I do believe Madame Pomfrey wishes to check you over one more time." Dumbledore said. "Once she finishes please come along to my office. My favorite candy of the month just happens to be Chocolate frogs."

A/N - Well what do you think of the premise so far. Still reading?

Chapter 4

Harry felt his feet were made of lead as he slowly walked to Dumbledore's office. Every step was an effort. His mind was flooded with thoughts of Fleur and of Gabrielle. "Why did they do it?" He kept asking himself, "They didn't owe him their lives, he was just helping." Deep in his thoughts he didn't hear the steps coming up from behind him.

"Harry" "Harry"

It wasn't until a hand was placed on his shoulder that Harry snapped out of his thoughts and saw his two best friends staring at him.

"Harry, how are you? We were so worried." Hermione asked. "And what is going on? There are all kinds of rumors going around."

"Yeah mate." Ron said. "They are saying you tried to kill Fleur's sister."

Harry shook his head, very tired again all of sudden. It always seems to work this way. Anytime something happens in this castle everyone seemed to think it was bad and it was His fault. Harry looked at Ron and Hermione. "What do you two think?"

"Well we know you would never do anything like that on purpose." Hermione said. "That's why we want to know."

"You know I wouldn't think..." Ron started then he looked away.

Harry looked at Ron incredulously, "Ron, you were all about me lying and cheating just a few months ago."

"I, I didn't mean it." Ron replied his ears turning red. "Look, I don't believe any of it really."

"So what did happen, Harry?" Hermione asked.

"I need to go see Dumbledore." Harry said and turned to continue his trek, then seeing the look on Hermione's face. "Walk with me and we'll talk."

Hermione and Ron fell in step at Harry's side he asked. "What did you see out at the lake?"

"Well, Victor had already rescued me and we were on the platform waiting for you and Fleur to show up." Hermione asked. " Oh, before I forget, Neville wants to know if that was Gillyweed you used."

Harry stopped and looked at Hermione, "Neville knew about Gillyweed?"

"He said he read about it in a book this year." Hermione answered.

"Oh, we didn't think to ask him, yeah it was Gillyweed." Harry said and went on to explain how Dobby had found him in the library and gave it to him. "Not sure if it was such a good thing now."

"But it worked!" Ron said. "After all the commotion died down and they got you, Fleur and that other girl off to the hospital, they announced you and Fleur were the first to the hostages but you both stayed to make sure the others were safe. You both ended up with 45 points. That makes you tied for the lead mate."

Harry didn't feel like cheering. He just turned and continued to Dumbledore's office. He didn't see the look of concern his friends were sharing.

"I was really worried when the time limit was up and you still hadn't come back Harry." Hermione started again. "Then when Ron came up the surface without you, I, I was terrified." And at that she took Harry's hand. "And Madam Pomfrey wouldn't let use see you in the Hospital wing. I've tried several times."

"Mental she's been. Really. Every couple hours she's asked about you." Ron added.

Harry felt her fingers collect around his and found himself thinking how soft her hand felt in his. For a brief moment he looked at her, thinking of how she looked the night of the Yule Ball. Then he thought of the two ladies lying in a Hospital bed who he would spend the rest of his life with.

"Yeah mate, what happened there?" Ron asked. "I came too in the middle of the lake freezing my arse off."

"Ron, language." Hermione snapped.

"I'll say arse if I want to say arse Hermione." Ron snapped back.

"Will you two stop?" Harry asked quietly. He didn't have the energy to listen to them argue, "Fleur was having trouble and, I well I went back to help her."

"Helping the beautiful Veela Harry?" Ron said with a wink, "Well I don't mind you leaving me then."

"It wasn't like that Ron. Fleur's magic was greatly diminished in the water." Harry started. "Dumbledore explained it to me. Since her Veela powers are from fire, well let's just say under the water she couldn't draw upon it. So she had trouble defending herself when she got attacked by Grindylow and I went to help."

They had come to a set of steps and they walked slowly up them. They passed several people along the way and most of them were giving him a wide berth.

"You saved her?" Hermione asked. "But what happened to her sister?"

Harry explained what Dumbledore told him about Veela and the transformation, about how it had happened right at that time and how Gabrielle had awoken below the water.

"So you saved both of their lives?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah." Harry replied gloomily.

"So what's the problem? And why have you been unconscious for three days?" Ron asked.

"There are other issues." Harry said. "And it led to me being unconscious."

Harry felt Hermione's hand tighten on his. "Harry what happened? What aren't you telling us?"

"They are in love with me." He murmured very quietly.

"What Harry?"

Harry stopped and looked at his friends again. He was thinking. "Dumbledore didn't say he couldn't talk about it, but did he really want to discuss it yet."

"I said they are in love with me." Harry repeated and his whole face turned red.

Ron looked shocked and then with a huge grin he slapped Harry on the back. "Way to go man, you have two Veela girls after you. You'll definitely be the talk of the school now. But hey be careful around them though, you know about those Veela girls."

Hermione was looking at Harry very closely, and could sense he was not considering it something to celebrate. "There is still something isn't there Harry, what else is there?"

Harry had rounded on Ron, feeling his anger rise at his friend. "They are NOT Veela girls, Ron. Their names are Fleur and Gabrielle Delacour." He spat back at Ron. "And if you so much as think of them as anything but that I swear I'll, I'll..."

Ron took a step back raising his hands "I, I didn't mean anything."

Harry turned to Hermione, "It's something else." And releasing her hand he turned and continued down the corridor. Hermione and Ron looked at each other again and hurried after him.

"What is it Harry?" Hermione asked again. "What aren't you telling us?"

Once more Harry stopped and looked at his friends. He did want to talk to someone but he knew he couldn't tell Ron. Ron would tell Fred and George and it would be around the school within an hour. "Ron, can I talk to Hermione for a few minutes?" Harry asked.

Ron got a hurt look on his face "I didn't mean anything about, about calling them Veela girls. Just, you know be careful."

"It's not that Ron," Harry started; he cast his mind around looking for something that Ron would definitely hate, "I want to ask her about assignments I missed."

Ron, totally oblivious to the obvious change of subjects, "Sure, uh I'll go down to the kitchens and see if I can get a snack."

"Ron" Harry said "Please do not mentioned anything about Fleur and Gabrielle until Dumbledore says it's ok."

"Yeah, sure Harry." Ron said and he walked away toward the staircase that went down to the kitchen.

Hermione watch Ron disappear down the steps and then turned to look at Harry, "Now what did you want to talk to me about? I am sure it has nothing to do with homework."

"I just need to talk to someone Hermione without it getting all over the school." Harry started, "and I need advice."

"Of course Harry." Hermione smiled at him. "What's the real problem?"

"Well I sort of did tell you the problem." Harry said. "Both girls are sort of in love with me."

"And you want to know how to what?" Hermione asked. "I'm not the person you need to talk to about relationships Harry. I haven't had a boyfriend." The last said with a blush rising in her cheeks.

"It's more complicated than that Hermione." Harry said. He looked at the wall over Hermione's shoulder "They, well they both named me bondmate at the lake."

Hermione's hand shot to her mouth, "Oh Harry,"

"You know what that is?" Harry asked.

"Well you have been unconscious for several days Harry." Hermione said, "and the Delacours haven't been seen either. So wondering if it could have been something to do with Veelas I've been reading about them."

Harry smiled "Of course Hermione would do that." He thought.

"So that's why you've been unconscious because you were bonding?" Hermione asked.

"No, Dumbledore said the bond initiation coming from two people against my weakened magical core caused that. Fleur and Gabrielle are being kept unconscious until I am ready."

"So you're going to do the bond?" Hermione asked. "It sounded really interesting." Hermione turned away and Harry could see she was blushing.

"Well I don't have a choice do I?" Harry asked.

"But it is your choice though Harry, the book was clear that once initiated the person receiving it has the right to accept it or reject it."

"Did your book say what happens if the bond is rejected?" Harry asked.

"No, not really."

"Here's how Dumbledore explained it to me." Harry started. "The bond is formed by all the love the Veela has to offer. If I reject the bond, the bond disappears with the love with it, which Dumbledore says would lead to insanity or worse for the Delacours."

Hermione's eyes widened. "Oh Harry."

"Look I really need to get to Dumbledore's office. Padfoot is waiting for me." Harry said. "Hermione, please do not tell anyone. I think at the moment I would prefer the school thinking I tried to kill Gabrielle."

"Ok Harry," Hermione responded, and then as Harry turned to go, "But Harry it could have been worse."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

"Well it could have been Pansy Parkinson and Millicent Bulstrode." Hermione said with a smile.

Harry couldn't help but smile back at her. "Thanks Hermione, at least you're keeping it in perspective for me."

A short time later Harry was knocking on the door to Professor Dumbledore's office. Harry heard the elderly wizard call softly, "Enter Harry." Once he was inside, he saw a large black dog lying on a rug under the window. Harry noticed Professor Dumbledore's wand wave, and heard several clicks as the door closed behind Harry.

"Sirius, you may show yourself, the office cannot be entered." And at those words the black dog transformed into a man.

"Sirius." Harry yelled and ran over to his Godfather.

"Harry!" Sirius said. "I am so glad to see you back awake. Madame Pomfrey was beginning to wonder why a dog kept coming to the Hospital wing to see you."

"As much as I wish you weren't here," Harry said thinking of Sirius's safety, "I am really glad you are."

"I bet you are Pup." Sirius said, and when Harry looked at him curiously, "Come on Harry, if you're going to be the godson of a dog, at least let me call you pup."

Harry smiled at his godfather, and then seeing he looked a little ragged. "Taking care of yourself aren't you Sirius?"

"Of course I have. It's been a little rough recently. I had to snag a few rats here and there." Sirius said and at the disgusted look on Harry's face, "It's really not that bad. Remember I get the taste buds of a dog and eating a rat doesn't taste disgusting."

"Uh..if you say so." Harry replied hoping if he ever got around to trying to be an animagus his form wasn't a dog.

"Besides the last few days, I've been getting Hogwarts food. Not only is our very generous friend here," Sirius nodded toward Dumbledore, "getting me food from the kitchens, but I'm allowed to wander the great hall during dinner time. I've gotten very good at snagging the biscuits they throw to me."

Harry laughed at the thought of the most wanted wizard in Great Britain's magical world wandering around snagging biscuits in the Great Hall of Hogwarts.

"So Pup," Sirius started again, "sounds like you have a problem."

Harry's mood soured almost immediately. "Yeah."

"Well if it helps any, I had a long conversation with their father."

"You WHAT?" Harry almost shouted. "You showed yourself?"

"Relax pup." Sirius smiled. "Albus did some serious glamour charms. I didn't even recognize myself when I looked in a mirror. But anyway, I told Mr. Delacour I was an old friend of your fathers, which of course I am. He is a nice man, Harry. He doesn't blame you for anything. He was in the stands when you came out of the water and saw what happened and he talked to his daughters before they were given the sleeping draft. He knows it was purely their choice."

"At least there's that." Harry muttered.

"I will tell you, that as he was discussing his daughters, Fleur in particular, it sounded a lot like you."

"What, what do you mean?" Harry asked in surprise.

"She is very much like you." Sirius repeated.

"But, but she is so beautiful and everybody wants to be with her." Harry said.

"But why do they want to be with her Harry?"

"Because she's gorgeous." Harry said.

"Any other reason?" Sirius said and at Harry's inability to reply "Exactly Harry, just like you have people fawning after you because of that scar on your head."

Harry's thought went back to Malfoy on the train coming to Hogwarts, Colin Creevy following him around with a camera and Professor

Lockhart trying to use Harry's fame. "But why would Fleur want to have anything to do with me? She thought of me as that boy."

"Did she Harry?" Sirius said. "She might have at first, but did you know she wrote to her sister almost weekly and a lot of the letters were about you?"

"She did? Why?" Harry asked. "What did she say?"

"Well you can ask her when you get a chance Harry, but she had noticed you as more than 'that boy' " Sirius said. "Now you told Dumbledore how you helped Fleur, but I want to ask you why did you help her?"

"Because she needed help." Harry exclaimed. "I couldn't leave her fighting Grindlows. She couldn't get free."

"So? That's one less competitor to worry about." Sirius said offhandedly.

"Sirius, I couldn't!" Harry yelled.

"I know Harry, just making a point." Sirius continued. "Now, when she was free of the Grindylow, why not swim on ahead and leave her? Fleur told her father how you protected her."

"What if more Grindylow had shown up or something else?" Harry said. "I, I mean she needed me to protect her."

"Protect the very beautiful silver haired Veela?" Sirius asked. "Or a woman who wanted to save her sister."

"Uh, what do you mean?"

"Harry, I do believe you told me that you fell under the Veela spell at the World Cup?" Dumbledore interjected.

"Yeah" Harry grimaced remembering the experience.

"Did you feel like that when you were saving Fleur or swimming to protect her?" Dumbledore continued to ask.

"No of course not. But you said her powers wouldn't work underwater anyway."

"Exactly Harry, you were not entranced by her beauty, but you were protecting her anyway." Sirius said.

"But anyone would have done that." Harry blurted out.

"You do not give yourself enough credit pup." Sirius said. "But you were the one who helped her, who guarded her, who risked his life to save her, not the Silver haired beauty but Fleur Delacour, a scared and lonely young lady desperately fighting under the lake. Now from what Gabrielle had told their mother," Sirius raised his hand when Harry was going to ask a question, "No, you'll have to ask her about it, but based on those comments, Fleur had already developed feeling for you. Maybe not romantic love, but definitely feelings. Now mix that with someone who looked past her beauty and helped her, no, who risked his life to save her for no reason and you see how those feelings might have deepened. Now finally, with all of those emotions rolling around in her body and her Veela powers coming back into full strength once she was out of the water and well she did what she did."

"What about Gabrielle?" Harry asked. "She's never even met me."

Sirius looked over at Dumbledore who took up the conversation, "Do you remember what I said about the Veela transformation; about when it happens and why?"

"Yeah" Harry said blushing some.

"Well she wasn't supposed to transform for at least six more months." Dumbledore sighed, "I am guessing here, but I think the way the deep water affected Fleur's magic also affected the Veela transformation process so it happened a lot sooner than it should have. Now according to her father she has been infatuated with Harry Potter since a very early age. She begged her father to come with him to this event just to meet you."

"She came all the way from Beauxbaton to meet me sir?"

"Yes Harry, now follow me with this." Dumbledore said, "The girl has a serious infatuation with you, and her sister writes to her and tell

her of all of these wonderful things about you. Now she's on the platform after you saved her life, the uh, hormones that normally would have been suppressed are flooding her systems, her Veela powers are newly awakened and the man who she had singularly focused on for a long time just saved her life and her sister is claiming him for herself. She lashes out the only way she can by claiming you as well.

"So she doesn't really love me?" Harry asked, a bit of sadness in his voice.

"Oh, she definitely loves you at some level Harry." Dumbledore said, "Remember what I said earlier, the bond cannot be created from nothing. So at sometime she did feel true love for you, it might have been an instant before she initiated the bond, but there is love."

"Oh." was all Harry could say.

"Look pup," Sirius said "What's bothering you the most?"

"Outside of two women who I barely know forcing me to commit myself to them for life?" Harry said "What about the one I'm meant to fall in love with?"

"What if these are ladies are the ones you are suppose to fall in love with Harry?" Sirius asked, "Fate can be cruel or can be the most wonderful thing in the world. Maybe this is fate's way of speeding up a process of happiness for you to make up for all the sorrow that you have endured. As I said, the older of the two has suffered very much like you when it comes to relationships. But she is beautiful, smart, and she has fallen in love with you."

At the words, 'beautiful and smart' an image of a bushy haired witch floated into Harry's mind. "Yeah, I guess." Harry replied. "So you would do it Sirius?"

"Harry, what I would do or wouldn't do is not the question is it." Sirius said, "You look like James but I know you have your mother's heart. I already know you've made up your mind. Lily wouldn't have been able to live with herself by choosing any other way and neither could you."

Harry turned to Dumbledore, "When can we wake Fleur and Gabrielle? I guess I need to learn all I can about my... my" He spent a second before continuing, "girlfriends."

"It's dinner time Harry." Professor Dumbledore said, "Would you prefer to eat first or later."

At the mention of the word dinner, Harry's stomach realized it had been three days since something that been sent its way and emitted a loud grumble.

"Ah, yes it seems your stomach would like something to eat. Would you prefer to eat in the Great Hall or something back in the Hospital wing?"

"Sir, when Fleur and Gabrielle awake won't they be hungry as well?" Harry asked. "Would it be possible to set up a place where the three of us could eat together?"

"Of course Harry, that is an excellent idea." Professor Dumbledore said "I'll attend to it myself."

"And sir?"

"Yes Harry?"

"Could you make sure there are dishes that Fleur and Gabrielle like, maybe ask their parents what their favorite foods are?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled, "I think you just proved that Fleur and Gabrielle found someone special." Then turn to Sirius, "I think it is time for Padfoot to go in search of biscuits."

Sirius grinned at Harry "Sure you don't want your dog with you at your dinner party?"

Harry blushed deeply, "Uh, that might not be a good idea." Then he was struck with a horrible thought. "Professor, you said that they would be able to read my thoughts. What about Sirius? They will know all about him."

Professor Dumbledore raised his hand, "Remember that they will also be able to read your thoughts of his innocence as well Harry.

Since you will not be able to lie to them, so they will know it is the truth. There will be two more people you can talk too and confide in."

"I won't be able to lie to them? Sir, am I going to lose myself in this bond?" Harry asked as he swallowed hard at this thought.

"Lose yourself Harry?" Professor Dumbledore replied. "Oh, no I think you might be misunderstanding what is going to happen. You and the ladies Delacour are going to share love, a very deep and permanent love. That doesn't mean you will never argue or disagree, it doesn't mean you can't live you own life and have you own interest. The only reason you won't be able to lie to them is because of the mental link. When you come to accept it, and find the love you have for those two ladies, I think you will find they blessed you with a gift few men ever enjoy."

"Yes sir, if you say so."

"Harry, go back to the Hospital wing, and I'll go take care of your dinner. Padfoot." Sirius morphed back into a dog, ran around Harry a couple of times causing the raven haired young man to grin and then he followed Dumbledore out of the office bounding down the steps wagging his tail.

Harry smiled at the antics of his godfather. His thoughts drifted to the young ladies asleep in the hospital wing. "well Hermione was right." He thought, "It could be much worse." And he walked out the door.

Chapter 5

When Harry arrived back in the Hospital Wing Madame Pomfrey was in her office. Harry sat on the foot of his bed so he could see each of the two ladies in the beds beside his. He again found himself looking at their silvery blonde hair, at their perfect complexion, and visualized the beautiful eyes that lay behind the closed eyelids. As he looked at Fleur, his eyes came to rest on the smile that was on her lips. "It was those lips that gave me my first kiss." Harry thought "And sealed my fate."

"Ah Mr. Potter you're back." Madame Pomfrey said from behind Harry. She came over and stood next to Harry and put a hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry Harry. I almost feel like this is my fault."

"Why?"

"I keep thinking that maybe I should have sent the young Delacour up here before you and her sister got to the platform," Madame Pomfrey said, "Or at least kept her unconscious. Maybe then none of this would have happened."

Harry looked at the concern in the school's nurse face. "You had no reason to. It's just the way things happened. This is definitely not your fault."

"Thank you Harry." Madame Pomfrey said, "You've spent so much time under my care Harry, I've grown quite attached to you." She turned and looked at the Delacours. "They were very concerned about you. Outside of the short time they met with their parents, they never left your side. Even when we gave them the sleeping draught, they fell asleep looking at you."

"I, I'm sure it's something to do with the bond." Harry said.

"Maybe, but Harry," Madame Pomfrey started. "I've been in charge of this wing for a long time. I've seen a lot of loved ones at bedsides and I've become very good at reading emotions. I can tell they care about you."

Harry didn't reply to this but his eyes came back to the peaceful sleeping face of Fleur then over to Gabrielle. "Why?" Was his only thought but in itself it carried many more questions.

"So where is that dog of yours?" Madame Pomfrey asked. "He's been in here so much in the last couple of days that I've grown quite accustomed to him. Never seen a better trained dog. He would sit and stare at you for hours.

Harry smiled at the thought of his godfather watching over him while he slept. "I think he's in the Great Hall, I understand that he's been popular there as well."

"Yes he has been. Oh, and Harry when you get a chance, you might want to let Miss Granger know you're awake. Poor girl has been asking about you every couple of hours. I think since we didn't let your friends visit you they might have presumed something far worse has happened to you."

At the sound of Hermione's name, an image of her floated in Harry's mind, he felt her hand from earlier intertwined with his. "I've already talked to her, she found me as I was walking to Professor Dumbledore's office."

"Of course she would." Madame Pomfrey said with a sad smile. "Now Harry, I need you to drink this potion and lay back down in bed for a few minutes."

Harry looked at the thick yellow concoction she handed him. "What does it do?"

"It's going to release your negative emotions Harry."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

Madame Pomfrey looked at Harry for a few seconds, "Albus was concerned that you might lose your temper before hearing all that you needed to know, so he had me administer a potion that keeps the more negative emotions like anger in check."

"But I got angry earlier at Ron, I—" Harry started, but then remembered how quickly the anger had disappeared.

"Then I would have hated to have seen you if your anger hadn't been bound Harry." Madame Pomfrey said. "The potion only diminishes the emotions, it doesn't eliminate them, but if you were

angry enough to feel it while under its influence, it was pretty severe."

Harry thought of what had caused the anger. Ron had called Fleur and Gabrielle Veela girls as if they were objects or prizes, but why would that have caused so great of anger? Images came flooding into his mind as if the question had burst a dam. He was looking at the mirror of Erised three years previous with Dumbledore saying "You, who have never known your family, see them standing around you". Then he was in the tunnel between the shrieking shack and the whomping willow. Sirius, the man who only an hour earlier Harry knew to be a mass murderer only to find out differently, was telling Harry he was his guardian and offering to have Harry come live with him causing Harry's heart to explode in joy, and finally Harry saw in a single instant, every moment he had spent unloved at the Dursley's. Every birthday gone unnoticed, every Christmas without presents, and every achievement unrecognized or even ridiculed. Then again in his mind he heard Dumbledore's voice,

"The bond cannot be formed out of nothing, there must be love for the individual before it can start. The love might not have been deep or it might have been from the depths of their hearts but it was there."

"since the bond is permanent you would eventually probably marry them both."

Harry looked over at the sleeping Fleur and Gabrielle and realized that was what they were offering him, unwavering love and a promise of a family. His family, no not his but for them to be a family.

Madame Pomfrey had been watching Harry as he seemed to wrestle with his thoughts, "Are you alright Harry?"

"I think I'll be fine, thanks." And Harry climbed into his bed and drunk the yellow potion. "Disgusting, but at least it's better than Skele-Gro." Harry thought. He felt his anger and frustration open up and threaten to overwhelm him until a word floated up from the depths of his mind; 'family' and a sense of calm enveloped him.

As Harry laid there thinking his stomach gave another grumble reminding him of the coming dinner. "Madame Pomfrey, Professor

Dumbledore is having a dinner prepared. Fleur and Gabrielle will need to be awakened soon."

"Oh, then I better start making the preparations." And she strolled back to her office.

It was twenty minutes later when Albus Dumbledore came through the hospital wing doors followed by Padfoot. Madame Pomfrey who had been keeping an eye on the door came out to greet him. "Ah Poppy," He said. "I think it is about time to awaken the ladies."

Until that moment Harry hadn't thought about what that meant. He knew that Fleur and Gabrielle were to be awakened of course, but now he realized it was time to face them. To talk with the two ladies he was destined to spend the rest of his life with and find out why. As with any true fourteen year old Gryffindor about to face an upcoming dinner with two beautiful ladies who were to be bonded to him, Harry's mind filled with panic and then went blank. Fortunately either by chance or if Professor Dumbledore had noted something in Harry's eyes, he said "Harry, the ladies are going to need to freshen themselves up and maybe a change of clothes, so why don't you do the same. When you are ready just call Dobby to show you the way to the dining room we set up."

"Yes sir, thank you sir."

"Oh and Harry," The Headmaster said "May I suggest something semi-formal."

"Uh, yes sir." And at that Harry bolted out the door. "Semi-formal?" Harry asked himself "What's that?" and he knew of only one place to get the answers he needed. Down one set of steps and then down another, he ran until he came to the large doors that led into the Great Hall. He threw them open and ignoring all the looks and whispers that started up around him, he looked to the Gryffindor table and spotted the person he needed and rushed over to her. "Hermione, I need your help." Then Harry saw every eye and ear within range was turned toward them, "Can you come with me?"

Hermione smiled at him, "Of course Harry."

When they were out of the Great Hall and away from everyone else Harry started, "I, I'm suppose to have dinner with Fleur and Gabrielle, but I don't know what to wear. Can you help me?" The last came out as a desperate plea as he turned to look into her eyes.

Hermione bit her lower lip and then smiled at him, "Of course Harry. I would be glad to."

The two of them rushed up to the Gryffindor tower and up the steps to the fourth year boy's dorm. "Professor Dumbledore said I should dress semi-formal." Harry said.

"Well that means you should have on nice slacks, a nice shirt and tie, and a clean robes Harry." At that she started looking through Harry's clothes. "Oh Harry, where do you get your clothes from?"

"Mostly my cousin's hand me downs." Harry replied.

"You could buy your own you know?" Hermione told him. "You have enough money."

"I know, but if Uncle Vernon saw new clothes he would ask where they came from." Harry replied. "And I never want them to know about my parents vault."

Hermione pulled out a shirt that was about two sizes too big for Harry. She took out her wand and cast "Reducio" and it shrunk to the right size. She did a similar spell to get his pants resized and another to get the cuffs unfrayed, and finally a cleaning spell to get a stain out of his tie.

Harry just watched her in amazement, "Hermione, I don't think I ever tell you how brilliant you are nearly enough," and then in a lower voice, "and how much I appreciate you."

Hermione looked back him blushing, "You pretty brilliant yourself Harry." Then giving him a shove toward the bathroom, "go take a shower and get dressed."

Hermione was waiting for Harry in the common room when he finished with his shower and was dressed. She looked him over and after straightening his tie, she said "You look very nice Harry."

"Only because of you Hermione." Harry said, then after a couple of seconds of silent pause, "Well I better go." Harry turned and said "Dobby." And instantly the diminutive house elf was by his side.

"Harry," Hermione said, looking into his eyes, "Good luck and here these might help." She cast her wand and two pink roses appeared in her hand and she handed them to him. As their hands touched, Harry once again felt the thrill he had felt earlier in the day.

"Thanks Hermione." He said quietly and then after another second of time he nodded for Dobby to show him the way and they walked out of the common room. If Harry had looked back one more time, he would have seen a tear had left one of Hermione's eyes and was leaving a wet trail down her cheek.

Harry was the first to arrive in the classroom that had been converted into a makeshift dining room. He immediately noticed that a lot of effort had been put into making it very stylish for the occasion. A table large enough for three had been placed next to the window which had a sweeping view of the lake. The table was covered in real china and crystal glasses both with the Hogwarts crest emblazoned on them. The fireplace on a far wall had a fire radiating heat against the February cold. There was also a couch and chair situated in front of the fireplace. Harry smiled at himself wondering if it was Sirius or Professor Dumbledore who had insisted on all of this.

Dobby had excused himself, saying he needed to prepare. "Dobby is to be your waiter tonight sir."

Harry was staring out the window looking at the lake. He was lost in his thoughts, while his stomach was doing flip flops in his midsection when he heard the door open behind him. He turned and looked. Though he had promised himself he would not, must not stare, he could not help himself. Coming into the room were two angels who had floated down to earth and now were standing just inside the door looking at him. Fleur had on a dark blue dress that accented her figure perfectly, and the color complemented her eyes to perfection. Her silver blonde hair flowed down her back and to Harry it seems she was floating on air. Gabrielle had on a light blue dress that matched the color of her eyes, and she had added curls to her normally straight hair. Each of them held an overly large book in their hand, which they sat on a table beside the door. For the next

few seconds or few minutes Harry looked at the two ladies, and they were gazing back at him. Both Fleur and Gabrielle had looks of uncertainty in their eyes. Harry finally broke out of his reverie as he remembered the roses Hermione had conjured. Picking them up from the table he crossed the space between them and handing each one of them, "Would either of you want to join me for dinner?" At least that is what Harry had planned to say but it came out more like "would either of you want to join me for dinner?"

"We would love to 'Arry." Fleur said, looking Harry in the eyes. "It ees definitely ze eyes" she thought to herself. "Even as nervous as 'e is now, zey still gleam as beautiful as ever."

They walked to the table and each lady paused beside her chair, and it took Harry a couple of seconds to register what he was supposed to do. He walked over to Gabrielle and held the chair for her, and then did the same for Fleur. When Harry took his seat he looked at each of the ladies at the table, both were staring back at him, apparently waiting for something. Gabrielle was biting her lip and both still had that troubled look on their face and Harry finally realized what it was. He knew he was accepting their bond but they did not. He was about to blurt out that he was going too but Professor Dumbledore's voice floated back through his head.

"It's much deeper than marriage, at least for them."

Taking a deep breath, Harry stood up from his seat and as he did so, the realization of what he was about to do overwhelmed him. He was about to commit his life and love to these ladies who he barely knew. Harry felt resentment start to rise, but that word 'family' floated back into his mind. He forced the negativity out of his mind and walked over to Gabrielle, kneeling beside her chair, he looked her in the eyes and said, "I do not know the correct words for this, but Gabrielle Delacour, you honor me with your love. I will accept your bond and become your bondmate." Gabrielle launched herself out her chair and smothered Harry in a hug but as she started to kiss him, he put a finger to her lips and whispered. "Later." Once Gabrielle had taken her seat again, Harry walked around to Fleur, kneeling beside her, he again said the words "Fleur Delacour, you honor me with your love. I will accept your bond and become your bondmate." Harry stood and put his arms around her and held her. He heard her whisper, "I am sorry 'Arry." Harry looked into Fleur's eyes searching for answers to questions he still needed to ask. Then

pulling away he returned to his chair. Before sitting down he look at both "We need to talk to clear up what has and will be done, but no matter what is said, that was my word I just gave. I will be your bondmate. We need to be totally honest with each other." Both Fleur and Gabrielle nodded their agreements. "But first, shall we start dinner?"

"Dobby." Harry said, and when he appeared, Harry had to try real hard not to laugh. Dobby had obviously tried to dress like a waiter, but he ended up with an assortment of clothing only Dobby would wear. "Harry Potter is ready for dinner sir?"

"Yes we are Dobby, but first have you been introduced to" Harry remembered how Ollivander had addressed Fleur in the weighing of the wands, "Mademoiselle Fleur Delacour, and Mademoiselle Gabrielle Delacour. Fleur, Gabrielle, this is Dobby, my friend."

Tears came to Dobby's eyes, "Harry Potter is too good to Dobby, he introduces me to his friends and calls me friend too."

"You are my friend Dobby." Harry said.

"Dobby, zat ees an unique outfit, but why do you not dress like ze other 'Ogwart's 'ouse elves." Fleur asked.

Harry was amazed, he had spent three years at Hogwarts without knowing there were house elves here. And Fluer not only knew about them but knew what they dressed like? Fleur looked at Harry and seemed to know what he was thinking. With a shrug "I spent a lot of time with Cedric and ze 'ufflepuff common room ees near ze kitchens, we would grab snacks from zere."

"Miss, I usually do." Dobby said, "But Dobby is a free elf and can dress as he pleases. Harry Potter freed Dobby."

" 'E was your 'ouse-elf and you freed 'im?" Gabrielle asked Harry.

"No, he had a very bad master, and I helped him get free." Harry replied blushing.

"That was right after Harry Potter killed the Basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets." Dobby said.

"Uh, Dobby how about dinner now?" Harry suggested, realizing that having the house-elf representative to the Harry Potter fan club wasn't helping.

Fleur looked around as if looking for a menu, "What are ze choices of food Dobby?"

"Oh Harry Potter suggested we ask your parents what your favorite foods were and we have it all ready to go." Dobby said and Harry blush deepened even further as Fleur's eyes flickered over to him as Dobby continued "There will be asparagus on greens and..." Dobby reeled off the rest of the meal.

"Zat sounds wonderful." Gabrielle said.

With a crack, Dobby was gone and at the same time their goblets filled with pumpkin juice and platefuls of asparagus on salad greens appeared in front of them.

"You did not 'ave to do zat 'Arry." Fleur said looking at her food then a look back up as she gave a small smile to Harry. "But zank you"

"I've heard you complain about our food," Harry said. "I thought it would be a nice change for you."

"We 'ave to get use to English food sometime 'Arry." Fleur said then seeing the look on Harry's face. "You 'aven't zought it all out yet 'ave you?"

"What do you mean?"

"What 'appens after ze tournament 'Arry? Do Gabrielle and I leave our bondmate and go back to Beauxbaton and France?" Fleur asked.

"She was right" Harry thought, he hadn't thought beyond accepting the bond and being their bondmate. He of course thought of Hogwarts as his home, but that wasn't fair to them, their lives were in France. "I, I could come there I guess." Harry said.

"Non, 'Arry, zis was our doing." Fleur said. "Your life ees 'ere with your friends and family." At the mention of family, Fleur saw Harry's eyes lower to the table.

"I don't have any family." Harry murmured. "At least none that care about me."

"I'm sorry 'arry." Fleur said with true sorrow in her voice. "You know you will be a part of our family. My Muther and father will love you. If you don't mind maybe we can go zis summer and visit zem. You'll love our 'ouse, it ees on ze sea and it ees very beautiful."

Harry stabbed a couple of spears of asparagus and ate them while thinking. "So what are you thinking will happen after this year?" Harry asked her.

"I finish school zis year—" Fleur saw another look on Harry's face, and again knew what he was thinking, " 'Arry, your age and mine are not important. I, I do love you."

"How did that happen Fleur?" Harry asked his voice rising slightly. "How did I go from being just a boy to someone you now say you love, and according to Professor Dumbledore you must, and want to bond with, to, to" Harry's voice lowered to a whisper, "to spend your life with?"

Fleur's eyes floated in wetness "You grew up in my 'eart 'arry. I won't deny zat was what I zought when we first met." Fleur said. "But I, I've never met anyone like you 'Arry. 'Ow do I explain zat you are ze bravest and most caring man I've ever met? Eet was your smile zat gave me the courage to face my dragon 'arry. Eet was a smile zat said I care what 'appens to you."

"Of course I cared what happened to you, but so would anyone else."

"I didn't get zat smile from Victor nor Cedric, 'Arry, I only got it from you. You were ze only one who saw past your own dragon and zought about someone else." Fleur said. "And you 'ad the worst dragon to face, yet you didn't seem to be afraid."

"Oh I was terrified." Harry said. "You must not have heard the sound of my heart beating by the crowd noise."

"I don't zink eet was zat bad 'arry." Fleur smiled, "I was so afraid for you, but once you got on your broom eet looked like you were actually 'aving fun."

"You must have missed it when the tail got me." Harry grimaced as his hand felt the spot where the cut had been.

"Non, I saw eet, but eet didn't even slow you up." Fleur said. "I was angry at Karakarov when 'e gave you zat ridiculous score. Zen Cedric and Roger told me about 'ow you 'ad faced Voldemort when you were only eleven, and killed a Basilisk when you were twelve. 'Ow could I zink of you as a boy, when you 'ad faced challenges zat I could not face? You are the bravest, most caring man I know 'arry."

"I had help with all of that, without my friends, without Fawkes' help I wouldn't have been able to do what I did." Harry said.

"You were so 'andsome at the Yule Ball 'Arry." Fleur said, "I was jealous of your date."

"You were jealous of Pavarti?" Harry asked. "But you had Davies draped all over you."

"Draped ees an accurate word 'Arry." Fleur said. " 'E never saw me 'Arry, 'e only saw my beauty. 'e never once looked into my eyes and smiled like you did 'Arry, not once. I kept stealing glances at you, you didn't seem to be 'aving fun zough."

"No, it definitely wasn't a great night." Harry agreed.

"Maybe if you 'ad a woman on your arm zat you loved?" Fleur asked. "Gabrielle and I will teach you 'ow to dance this summer so next time you can 'ave fun."

"We'll see." Said Harry and Fleur smiled.

"So by the Yule Ball I already 'ad feeling for you 'arry." Fleur continued her explanation. "Zen came ze lake. When I got caught by ze Grindylow, and realized zat I couldn't fight zem off, I was afraid. Afraid zat I couldn't rescue Gabrielle, even a little afraid I might not survive. Eet was dark and I was so alone, zen out of nowhere a 'ero, my 'ero came, you saved me, protected me, 'elped me rescue my sister and I when I looked into your eyes, saw ze depth of your soul,

I lost my 'eart right zen and zere 'Arry. When you didn't leave immediately, I knew I 'ad to stay with you. Zen Gabrielle transformed and ze Grindylow attacked again but zere was my 'ero again, risking 'is life fighting to save me, fighting to save my sister. I was terrified for Gabrielle, but once we were on the platform 'arry, and I knew she was safe. All I could zink of was you. 'ow much I wanted you, 'ow much I wanted your love. You 'ad just saved our lives and when my magic returned, I couldn't stop it. Not sure I wanted to stop it. I named you my bondmate." Fleur took a second to catch her breath, "I'm sorry 'Arry. I am sorry zat you are being forced into something you don't want, sorry zat you might never love me ze way I love you, but I am not sorry to have fallen in love with you." By this time Fleur's composure was gone; her tears were streaming down her face but she kept a defiant look in her eyes.

Harry was shocked, he could feel the pure feeling she had put in the words. He knew right then and there that she really did love him, not just loved him but was deeply in love with him. His own heart gave a lurch, and before he could stop himself, he had pulled Fleur into a hug and then found his lips upon her, flashes of white and gold were going off in Harry's mind. As Fleur kiss became more, Harry pulled away and looked into her eyes. "What's wrong 'arry?" Fleur asked.

"I, I've never really kissed a girl before." Harry admitted.

Fleur couldn't help but give a slight giggle, causing Harry to blush. "I'm sorry 'Arry, eet's just with all zat you 'ave done, I would zink girls would be dying to go out with you. You've never 'ad a girlfriend?"

Harry looked down, "No, I haven't."

"I'll let you in on a little secret 'Arry, I 'appen to know of two lovely ladies who want you to be zeir boyfriend." Fleur said.

Harry couldn't help but smile at her, but then he remembered Gabrielle. He turned to face her only to find her crying. Harry walked around the table and put his arm around her. "What's wrong?"

"I am sorry 'arry, I am so very sorry." She said, "I shouldn't have claimed you as well. I didn't realize 'ow much Fleur loved you."

"It's alright," Harry said, his heart breaking from her tears. "Why don't you tell me about it?"

Gabrielle took a moment to compose herself, "I know you're going to think zis ees silly 'Arry, but I've 'ad a crush on you for the longest time."

Those words made Harry think of a red headed witch that couldn't stay in the same room with Harry without blushing when he first met her. "It's not silly Gabrielle. I didn't deserve it, but it's not silly."

"Well, I use to zink about the boy-who-lived, and played around writing zings like boy-who-loved-Gabrielle or boy-who-lived-to-see-Gabrielle." At this Gabrielle was blushing. "I dreamed about you, that you must live in a castle—" at this Harry couldn't help but laugh."What?" Gabrielle asked.

"Before coming to Hogwarts, I didn't even know about magic." Harry admitted, "I lived with muggles until I came here."

"What were zey like?" Gabrielle asked.

Harry's face darkened as he thought about the Dursleys, "Not tonight Gabrielle, not tonight, they are not nice people."

"Oh," Gabrielle said innocently, "I'm sorry 'arry. I shouldn't 'ave asked."

"You didn't know, but please finish your story."

"Well zen Fleur came to 'ogwarts and told me she 'ad met you." Gabrielle continued. "She wrote to me all the time and a lot of it was about you. I didn't know she was falling for you, but ze letters fueled my fantasies for you. Zen zere was a picture of you on your broom in ze dragon arena in ze newspaper at 'ome. Zey were covering ze story since Fleur was one of ze Champions." Gabrielle explained. "But zere you were, 'andsome and courageous, and your eyes seem to look right into my 'eart. When I found out father was coming to the second event, I begged 'im to let me come. I wanted, no I needed to meet you. We got 'ere and ze next thing I know I was agreeing to be Fleur's 'ostage. I would be in something with you. I knew when eet was over, I would get to meet you. Ze next thing I know I'm waking up in ze water, I can't breathe, zose creatures were trying to pull us down and I knew I was going to die. Zen I see you. I didn't know it was you at ze time, but you were zere, you were pulling me up zen

everything went black. When I came too, ze nurse was 'elping me, but I was looking around for Fleur and for 'Arry Potter. Zen you and she were beside me, and I recognized you, from ze picture and from your eyes under ze lake. 'Arry Potter 'ad saved my life. All of fantasies seem to rush out of my 'ead, because ze real man beside me was so much better. Zen I 'eard Fleur, I knew what was coming, she was trying to steal you away from me. I couldn't 'elp myself 'arry, I 'ad just met you, but knew you were ze one for me, and I couldn't let 'er take you. Something inside of me came breaking zrough and I named you. I'm so sorry 'arry."

Harry found himself hugging Gabrielle giving her a little rocking motion to sooth her. "I don't blame you Gabrielle. I'm to be your bondmate. We'll make it work." Then looking into her tear filled eyes, he kissed her.

Harry looked at the two Delacours, how could he resent them, they both loved him, and he felt his own heart tugging toward them. They were both exceptionally beautiful, both physically and in their hearts. "Let's finish our meal, I'm sure Dobby is waiting to serve the next course." And they did just that. Though the next time Dobby had appeared, Fleur had pulled him aside and whispered a couple of things to him. Dobby had nodded and disappeared as the next course was served. The three of them seemed to mutually agree that after the heartfelt confessions of earlier, they needed a little break before the issue was discussed again. When Dobby had appeared before dessert he handed Fleur a little bag. When Harry raised a questioning eyebrow she just smiled at him.

Once the meal was completely over, and the dishes had disappeared, Fleur brought out the little bag, from its depth she pulled three small vials. " 'Arry, Gabrielle, come over 'ere for a minute." When they were standing beside her, she said " 'Arry, I know you might still feel a bit unsettled about my age and yours, but 'ere drink zis." and she handed a vial to Gabrielle and Harry. When they hesitated, she said, "Go on, eet's not going to 'urt you." She pulled the stopper on her own, and they all drunk the contents together. Fleur pulled out her wand and transfigured a small mirror that was also in the bag, into a full floor length one. Harry felt himself getting taller, his shoulders broadening and heard the buttons on the shirt fly off. "Hermione is going to kill me" was the thought that came to his mind as he quickly loosened his tie.

Fleur waited for the changes to settle down. She pulled Harry and Gabrielle close to her, and pointed at the mirror. "Zat was a ten year aging potion 'arry, zis ees us in ten years." Harry looked in the mirror and saw himself, a little taller and sturdier, his face slightly darker. Beside him was Fleur, she didn't look like the potion had aged her a single day, and Gabrielle, now looking the same age as her sister, similar but distinctively different. Both as beautiful as could possibly exist. "Can you see anything wrong with zeir ages 'arry?" Fleur asked pointing at the mirror, then as she looked back in Harry's eyes, her hand found the opening to his shirt that the lost buttons had created and she reached in and laid her hand upon his chest. In that one instant, every fiber of his body felt like it was centered on the palm and fingers that were touching his skin. As good as that felt, he was glad when several seconds later he felt himself shrinking back down to his normal size. When Harry looked at Fleur he could see the twinkle in her eyes, making her even more beautiful.

"Now eet's time for you to get to know us 'Arry." Gabrielle said. The two ladies walked over to the table they had rested the books they had brought with them on. "Since we don't 'ave much time before the bond needs to start, mother zought zese would be a good start. But you 'ave to promise not to laugh."

"Laugh at what?" Harry asked.

"Zese are out albums, 'Arry."

"Well I can't promise not to laugh, but I promise not to laugh at you." Harry said. "Now let's see the baby pictures."

Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle spent the next few hours sitting on the couch in front of the fire looking through the albums. Gabrielle and Fleur told stories of their childhood, and places they have visited. What their home was like and what the sea looked like. After a couple of attempts Fleur and Gabrielle realized that Harry would enter a darker mood if they asked about his life away from Hogwarts. Harry told the ladies his versions of his previous three years; he even opened up enough to tell them about hearing his parents when Dementors were close. He found talking about it much easier when he was surrounded by these two ladies who loved him.

It was well past midnight before they finished. Harry was at first concerned that they would be in trouble for being up after hours, but

realized Dumbledore would have reminded him of the time if it was important. Well that is what he hoped. The three of them walked slowly back to the Hospital wing, murmuring happily to each other with a small laugh here and there. None of them noticed the large black dog following them the whole way. They found suitable bed clothing beside their beds and as Harry climbed under his covers, he noticed that both ladies were still clutching their roses.

Chapter 6

Harry awoke the next morning to find Gabrielle sitting on his bed looking at him, holding her rose in her hand. She obviously had been crying and still maintained a look of great sadness in her eyes. "What's wrong Gabrielle?" He asked.

"I'm sorry 'arry." She said.

"For what Gabrielle? Harry asked. When Gabrielle didn't answer but just kept looking at him, he continued. "I told you last night, I didn't blame you, and I really don't."

"But Fleur loves you so much and now—" Gabrielle started.

Harry took Gabrielle's hand, "and now what Gabrielle?" Then Harry looked over at Fleur and could see her still sleeping peacefully. "Let's go for a walk and talk about this so we don't wake Fleur up right now."

"But I don't 'ave any clothes except my dress 'ere. My parents will bring some by soon zough."

At the mention of Gabrielle's parents, Harry stomach suddenly developed butterflies. He knew today he had to face the elder Delacours. Not just today, but very soon today. "Uh would they be awake? Maybe we can send Dobby to get your clothes from them."

"Zat would be wonderful 'Arry."

"Let me go into Madame Pomfrey's office to call him so he doesn't wake Fleur when he arrives. Is there anything special you want to wear?" Harry asked.

"Non, 'arry. Anyt'ing mother picks out will be fine." Gabrielle said. She watched Harry go into the school nurse's office and talk to her, then saw Dobby appear and Harry said a few things to him and then the house-elf disappeared.

It was less than ten minutes later when Dobby walked back into the hospital wing with her change of clothes. "Dobby got your clothes miss; your mother says these should be fine for you Miss Gabrielle."

"Zank you Dobby." Gabrielle said, and made her way to the bathroom to change. Harry had changed back into his pants and shirt from the night before and in ten more minutes the two of them were walking out the hospital door.

It was the last day of February and much too cold for Gabrielle to walk outside so they wandered the halls of the castle. As it was still very early not many students were up yet, and those that were awake were making their way to the Great Hall for breakfast. As they walked Gabrielle kept looking at Harry and he would smile at her. He guided her to a particular room on the third floor, it was empty but in the middle of the floor was a trap door. "Do you remember me telling you of our first year adventure?"

"Yes 'Arry"

"This is where it began. This room is where the giant three headed dog was kept, and down there," Harry nodded toward the trap door, "was where the Philosopher's Stone was kept."

"Can we go down zere?"

"Well I'm not sure if the devil's snare is a good landing spot or what it is like down there anymore, but maybe someday we'll bring a broom and explore it again. But Gabrielle, the reason I brought you here is to explain something. When Ron, Hermione and I jumped down that hole we had no idea what was going to happen. We leaped into the unknown and faced the challenges that were waiting for us and because of that it all worked out." Harry put his arms around Gabrielle, "I think that is a lot like us becoming bonded. We have no idea what is going to happen, but you, Fleur and I are going to leap into an unknown and we will face the challenges and it will work out. Gabrielle, I enjoyed last night. I saw the ladies who love me and want to spend their life with me, and I found that you and your sister are two of the most beautiful people I have ever met, and I don't mean just your looks."

"I 'ad fun as well 'Arry and I know Fleur did to." Gabrielle said.

"My Go—, I mean someone I talked to before you woke up suggested that maybe fate is rewarding me by bringing you and your sister in my life. Maybe he's right." Harry said. "I won't lie to you and tell you that I don't feel a little frustrated, but you and Fleur are very

special. So no more blaming yourself Gabrielle. Let's just see where fate takes us."

"Do you zink you will ever love me 'Arry?" Gabrielle asked suddenly.

Harry looked into those beautiful blue eyes for a long time before answering, "Gabrielle, I can truthfully say I want to, but I guess first I have find out what love actually is."

"What do you mean?"

"Before you and Fleur told me last night, only one other person has told me they loved me and I only met him less than a year ago." Harry felt tears coming into his eyes, and make an effort to blink them back.

"Only one? Who ees it zat told you?"

"I can't tell you yet Gabrielle, but after we are bonded, he will be one of the first people I introduce you too. He's the closest thing I have to family." Harry explained. "I know my parents loved me, and I'm sure they told me, but I can't remember it."

"I'm sorry 'Arry, I truly am." Gabrielle said, "Fleur and I love you."

"But do you love me Gabrielle, or the boy-who-lived?" Harry asked. "You saying last night that you had a crush on me forever, and that reminded me way to much of Ginny, my friend's sister. Are you in love with me, or the thought of me?"

" 'Arry, I don't zink you are the one I use to dream about." Gabrielle started, "You are so much better. Even if I 'ad never 'eard of you 'Arry, I probably would 'ave fallen for you last night. You're 'andsome, kind, zoughtful and very brave. Every girl in zis castle would have fallen for you if zey could 'ave 'ad last night with you."

Harry didn't know what to say, he just smiled at Gabrielle.

"Ees Ginny ze same girl you rescued from ze Chamber of Secrets 'Arry?"

"Yes she is."

"And she isn't een love with you? Gabrielle asked.

"No, well she had that crush on me at the time. She couldn't even stay in the same room with me when we first met, but I think she is getting over it."

"Tell me 'Arry, if eet wasn't for Fleur and I, who would you 'ave liked to end up with?" Gabrielle asked.

"I really don't know Gabrielle." Harry answered. "I had a small crush on Cho Chang, you know the dark haired girl that was Cedric's hostage, but obviously she likes Cedric. Pavarti was my date to the Yule Ball but nothing clicked there. So I really don't know."

"What about ze girl zat was Krum's hostage?" Gabrielle asked. "She was frantic when you passed out on ze platform. Dumbledore 'imself 'ad to intervene to keep 'er away while Madame Pomfrey took care of you."

"That's Hermione. She's the one who has always been there for me. She's my best friend." Harry replied smiling as an image of Hermione floated in his mind. "I..., well she's the smartest witch; no she is the smartest person I have ever met. If it wasn't for her, I would have been dead a long time ago, or at least failed every one of my subjects. Even when we argued last year it was because she was trying to protect me. But I was my typical stubborn hardheadedness person and got mad at her."

"What did she do?"

"I received a very nice present last year at Christmas, my firebolt actually," Harry started, "but Hermione thought that it might be cursed so she told our head of house and it was confiscated and tested, but later is was released back to me when no curse was found. Now looking back I know Hermione had my best interest at heart, it's just my temper flared up and I was too stupid to realize it then."

"Who sent the firebolt 'Arry?" Gabrielle asked.

"At the time we didn't know, but later I found out." Harry replied. "And that is another one of those things I can't tell you just yet." At that, Harry's stomach grumbled. "Well we better head back and see

if Fleur is awake, and maybe get some breakfast."

When they re-entered the hospital wing, Harry's stomach stopped grumbling and filled with butterflies again. Fleur was awake and sitting up in her bed and beside her were two people who must be her parents.

" 'ARRY..." Fleur had jumped out of bed and rushed to Harry when she saw Harry and Gabrielle walk in. She threw her arms around him and waited for Harry to kiss her, but she noticed his eyes were glued to the couple still sitting beside her bed and she could see his nervousness. "Come meet our parents 'Arry." Fleur took one of Harry's hands, and Gabrielle the other and they guided him over to their parents. "Papa, Maman, zis is 'Arry Potter our soon to be bondmate. 'Arry zis is our parents, Alain and Apolline Delacour."

Harry noticed that Mr. Delacour was shorter than his wife. He had a pointed black beard and a twinkle in his eye of a good natured man. Mrs. Delacour could have passed for Fleur's and Gabrielle's older sister. She had the same silvery blonde hair, and radiated beauty. Harry remembered that Mrs. Delacour would be half Veela.

"Nice to finally meet you Monsieur Potter . I trust you are well?" Mr. Delacour asked holding out his hand which Harry shook. Harry had seen on his cousin's TV shows the French sometimes kissed as a greeting and was extremely glad when Mr. Delacour did not attempt a similar greeting. "Fleur was just telling us about your dinner last night. She ees most taken with you."

"Uh, thank you sir. Your daughter, uh daughters are very nice." Harry stammered nervously. "Uh, please call me Harry though."

Mr. Delacour looked at his wife and nodded, " 'arry can we talk?" He put his arm around Harry's shoulder and led him back toward Madam Pomfrey's office. "Madam Pomfrey may we borrow your office for a few minutes for a private conversation?"

"Certainly." Madame Pomfrey said. "I would like to check on the girls anyway." And with that she strolled out of the office.

Mr. Delacour turned to Harry. "You do not need to be nervous around Apolline and I 'arry." He started. "If anything eet ees we who owe you."

"Uh, you don't owe me anything sir." Harry stammered.

"Look 'Arry, we know it was our daughters' doing and for you to agree to be zeir bondmate, for giving us our daughters back we are ze ones who are zankful." Mr. Delacour said quietly. "Apolline and I 'ave spoken to the 'eadmaster, and to your father's friend, Monsieur Brown." Harry smiled as he thought that must be Sirius. "We've also talked to your other professors. Professor McGonagall, Flitwick and 'agrid all think very 'ighly of you. Of course Fleur 'as been gushing like a young—, like a very much in love girl ever since we came zis morning."

"Thank you sir." Was all Harry could think to say.

"Of course we know about your parents, but I 'ope you know that from zis time on we consider you part of our family 'Arry." Alain Delacour said. "Just take care of our girls. One day when you are older," then looking at Harry thoughtfully, "much much older, you might have a daughter of your own. At zat time you will know what I feel in my 'eart right now."

"I would never let anything happen to either of them sir. I just hope I don't disappoint them." Harry said.

Mr. Delacour looked at Harry in wonder. "You're basically forced into a relationship you didn't ask for and you are concerned about disappointing them?"

"Uh, yes sir. I, well, I don't want them to regret—" his voice trailed off as Harry was confused as to why a smile had come across Mr. Delacour's face.

"Well I can't fault my daughters. It seems like zey did find someone worthwhile. Good luck 'Arry."

"Sir, do I need to talk to Mrs. Delacour?"

"You are more than welcome to 'Arry, but she knows everything we just discussed.

"What? How—?" but the answer came immediately. "You're bonded?"

"Yes we are. But Apolline initiated ze bond after we 'ad been dating and with my consent so I can't say I know what you are feeling now."

"What's it like sir, I mean to be bonded?" Harry asked.

"Zere is nothing like it 'Arry." Mr. Delacour said. "I knew I loved Apolline, and I presumed she loved me, but once we bonded and I was able to know and feel ze love from 'er well, zere is nothing like it 'Arry."

"Uh, yes sir." Harry said.

"Look at me 'Arry." The father said. "I know I'm not the 'andsomest person around but my wife she is so gorgeous." When he said that he paused for a second and then continued. "In a typical relationship over time I might have wondered why Apolline loved me, being as beautiful as she is. But 'Arry, I know, I can feel 'ow much she loves me."

"But what if I don't love them as much as they love me?" Harry asked.

"Oh starting out eets most likely 'Arry. Fleur and Gabrielle know zat." Mr. Delacour said. "But I presume you 'ave some feeling for my girls since you obviously treated zem very well last evening. I doubt love will take too long."

"What do you mean?" Harry asked. "I thought I would not lose myself in this."

"Oh you're not, but zey will 'ave a serious advantage 'arry." Mr. Delacour said. "You will feel zeir love all ze time, and zey will quickly know what you like and don't like. I doubt it will take long before you're wrapped around their fingers as much as I am."

Harry felt a fond feeling for Mr. Delacour. He had made Harry's anxieties lessen a great deal. "Yes, sir. Uh sir, what is left of the bonding, I mean what else do we do?"

"Normally it would have all happened already, but since the power of the bond initiation overwhelmed you," Mr. Delacour said. "The final piece did not happen."

"What is that sir?" Harry asked.

"You accepting it 'Arry. Zat is all zat is left."

"How do I do that sir? That is what I guess I am asking."

"Ah, well when everyone is ready," Mr. Delacour replied. "Fleur and Gabrielle will allow their magic to flow again, and you should find yourself somewhere with your 'eart."

"What do you mean sir?"

"This is a difficult part to explain, but when you experience it, you will know what to do." Mr. Delacour said. "You are going to be with your 'eart, and you will let Fleur and Gabrielle's magic in."

"But what does it mean that I'll be with my heart?" Harry asked envisioning himself in his chest with his heart beating beside him.

"It is all going to 'appen in your mind 'Arry." Mr. Delacour explained. "You will find yourself somewhere where you feel safe. Your 'eart will be represented by something you feel safe storing your love in. It's 'ard to explain 'Arry. But for me, when Apolline started the bonding, I found 'er and me in ze attic of my old house. That is where I use to 'ide in my youth when zings were wrong. I always felt safe zere. And in ze attic during my bonding, zere was a trunk. I recognized the trunk; it was where I stored all of my treasures of my youth. But during the bonding, the trunk represented my 'eart. I knew all I 'ad to do was open the trunk and have Apolline reach into it, or enter my 'eart as you might say. That completed the bonding." Mr. Delacour got another faraway look. "Eet seems Professor Dumbledore is 'ere along with your dog. Are you ready 'Arry?"

"Uh, not really, but might as well get it over with." Harry replied.

"Not over 'Arry," Mr. Delacour said looking Harry in the eyes. "Eet is just beginning for you." With that he turned and walked out of Madame Pomfrey's office with Harry following a couple of steps behind.

As they re-entered the bed line hospital wing, Professor Dumbledore noticed them. "Ah Harry, how are you this morning?"

"A little nervous sir."

"That would be expected. Is there anything else you want or need to do before we begin the final part of this?" Professor Dumbledore asked. "I think the ladies would not like to wait until the last minute."

"Uh, no sir." Harry said, and then smiling at Fleur and Gabrielle who both were looking back at him. He crossed the room to them, took their hands in his and said, "I'm ready."

"Then let's begin."

I was planning on leaving this as a cliffhanger, but I am not sure how often I am going to be get this updated. Real life is catching up to me. I imagine the updates will come more like one a week for the next few weeks. Maybe even slower.

Next Chapter - The bonding

Chapter 7

As he held Fleur's and Gabrielle's hands, Harry's mind drifted back to the words Mr. Delacour has said.

"You will find yourself somewhere you feel safe"

He couldn't help but try to anticipate where the bond would happen. Harry thought of all the places he had been in his life. He spent his childhood at the Dursley's and that definitely wasn't safe. Hogwarts? He had fought a troll, Voldemort twice, a basilisk and a Dragon at Hogwarts. The Burrow? The last time he was there he was taken to a place where rampart Death Eaters were blasting a campground apart. There was no place Harry felt safe that he could think of. His internal reverie was interrupted when Madam Pomfrey laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Mr. Potter... Harry, I think it is best if you lay down back in your bed." She said. "We're not sure what is going to happen to you physically with the dual bonding. You may become unconscious again."

Harry climbed back into his bed, and Fleur and Gabrielle walked to either side him. Each took a hand and Fleur said. "Harry, close your eyes love, and zink of Gabrielle and me. We will release our magic now and join you. Remember to wait for us both. Gabrielle and I both 'ave to enter at ze same time."

Harry looked into Fleur's blue eyes and then into Gabrielle's, with a smile he nodded and closed his eyes. He felt each of the ladies lift the hand they held and kissed it lightly, warmth radiated from the spot they had kissed, up his arms until it met in the center of his chest. Harry could feel the warmth build in his chest that grew warmer as if a fire was bursting inside of him. Again Harry found himself looking at two beautiful birds surrounded by fire flying across his mental vision. He watched them climb into the air and then it all went black.

All the people who surround the bed witnessed an amazing event, as each girl kissed Harry; a golden aura appeared around them. The aura worked its way from the spot of the kiss up Harry's arms and meeting in the middle of Harry's chest. As the two lights met they doubled in brightness and surrounded all three of them.

When the blackness ended Harry didn't find himself at Hogwarts or Privet drive or the Burrow. He was standing on the sidewalk of a regular muggle neighborhood across from a house he had never known but was intimately familiar with. The house was a regular two story house with a small fenced yard with nice flowers surrounding it. He knew inside the house was a regular kitchen, three bedrooms, and most important was there was no cupboard under the steps. He knew several years ago a library had been added to this house, in fact a little less than three years ago it had appeared. The weather was perfect and sunny, but then again it was always perfect and sunny here. There never was darkness in this house. This time though the house seemed to be filled with a vivid golden glowing light coming from the windows. There was the kitchen, and there was the library and through the light radiating out the window he could see her sitting there reading. He smiled, she was always there reading when he came here. Harry took a step toward the house as if drawn from an earlier time before he heard the voices of two angels.

"Aarry wait for us, we 'ave to go wiz you."

Harry turned and saw Fleur and Gabrielle coming up beside him, each again taking a hand. "Is zis where you grew up 'arry?" Gabrielle asked.

Harry's thoughts turned to Privet Drive and the image of that house materialized a short way away from them. "No, I.." Harry nodded toward the new image "grew up there." And just as quickly as it had appeared, the image of privet drive disappeared.

"Where are we 'Arry?" Fleur asked kindly. "It's a beautiful 'ouse."

"Uh, not really anywhere." Harry responded. "It actually just an imaginary house I dreamed up to escape to when times got difficult with my relatives. I would lie in my cup—, on my bed and go to this place in my mind." And as he said that images of Harry past that caused him to go to this place started flickering on and off. An image of Harry being thrown into a cupboard with a dingy mattress and being told he would stay there. Another of Harry being chased by his cousin as Dudley yelled "We're going to get you freak." Image after image of the horrors Harry suffered at the hands of his relatives came flickering by. Harry wanted to stop the images, to not have

Fleur and Gabrielle see him like that. But he didn't know how to make it stop. The more he tried the more images would appear.

"I always dreamed of a home like my parents had." Harry started realizing it would be easier to explain, "I don't know what their house looked like so I built this place in my mind. I would imagine I lived here and my parents would be alive, I would celebrate Christmas and..." Harry trailed off in the explanation. Fleur and Gabrielle could feel the sadness wash over them and each thought they wanted to give their bondmate the happiness he desired and deserved. Those who were watching the bonding could only wonder why tears had formed in Harry's eyes and Gabrielle's and Fleur's faces showed signs of sadness.

"Will you take us in 'Arry?" Fleur asked. "Show us your 'eart. Let us give you our love 'Arry."

Harry could feel the pull of the Veela magic urging him to go toward the house. A voice flitting through his consciousness, "just walk in the house and it will all be better." He started toward the house with Gabrielle and Fleur but they had only gone two steps when an image of Uncle Vernon appeared in front of him and started yelling "Where do you think you're going FREAK?" causing Harry to flinch. Fleur pulled Harry to go around the image when another of Aunt Petunia appeared in front "You think you deserve love FREAK?" Gabrielle pulled this time and an image of Dudley appeared, "Who would ever love you FREAK?"

Harry stumbled back, Fleur called to Harry, "Zey are not real 'Arry, ignore zem. We love you 'arry." And again she tried to pull Harry around the three Dursley images, but more images kept appearing, another Uncle Vernon and another Dudley, an Aunt Marge all yelling "FREAK". The more Fleur and Gabrielle tried to help Harry fight, the more images would appear until Harry stood still and could not move. The torment continued until finally Harry collapsed into a heap on the sidewalk. Slowly the house and all that surrounded them crumbled into dust leaving them in blackness and then they were back in the hospital wing. Harry wasn't moving and his eyes were closed. Gabrielle and Fleur looked at each other exchanging a look of desperate panic. Then turning to their father and mother, Fleur said "We could not bond." And at those words a verbal pandemonium broke out in the hospital wing.

Dumbledore's voice cut through the verbal clatter. "Quiet everyone. Madam Pomfrey, how is Harry?"

"He's unconscious Albus, I think he is in shock." The school nurse said. "I would like to administer a sleeping potion."

"Since there isn't much time left, I would prefer if you didn't do that. We will need him awake as soon as possible, is there anything else you can do?" Professor Dumbledore asked sadly.

"I'll give him a calming draught as soon as he comes around." She said.

"Very well Poppy. Miss Delacour," Professor Dumbledore said addressing Fleur, "could you tell us what happened?"

"Yes sir, the bonding started out fine." Fleur started "We were at a 'ouse, but it wasn't a real place. It was somezing 'arry said 'e dreamed up to escape to when 'e 'ad difficulties when 'e was younger. We saw images of 'im being abused and..."

Professor Dumbledore made a sound as if to say something but decided against it and said. "Sorry, please continue."

"Well, 'arry told us about 'ow 'e imagined 'imself living zere with 'is parents and 'e was incredibly sad 'eadmaster." Fleur continued. "But just as we started to go toward ze 'ouse zis big man appeared, the same one we 'ad seen abusing 'Arry when 'e was younger and 'e started calling 'Arry a freak, zen a woman appeared, again she was ze one from ze earlier abuse and she also started calling 'Arry a freak, and more and more kept popping up, we tried to get around zem but more came and kept chanting 'Freak' at 'Arry. I tried to tell 'Arry to ignore zem but 'e couldn't. Finally 'Arry just wouldn't move but it kept going until 'Arry collapsed and ze images and the place all went black and we were back 'ere. Why did it 'appen and what is going to 'appen to Gabrielle and me?" The last questions were to her parents who were ashen faced.

"I don't know ma petite." Mr. Delacour answered "We will do whatever it takes to find out zough."

"I will go see if I can get a Veela bond expert to get 'ere immediately." Mrs. Delacour said " 'eadmaster, is there a Floo connection I can use?"

"By all means, in my office. I will walk you there myself right away." Professor Dumbledore said. "In fact, may I ask all of you to join us; I would like both of your daughters to do something for me." And with that he started to the door followed by the family Delacour. When padfoot stood up to follow, Professor Dumbledore said "Padfoot, please stay with Harry, if he wakes up and we are not here, he will need you. Poppy, how much time do you think we have?"

"Less than eight hours Albus, if the original forty-eight hours time period was correct." said a very grave looking Madam Pomfrey. "Though I would like to consult with the bond expert if I get a chance."

"Then we shall hurry," Professor Dumbledore said, turning to the Delacours, "Can all of you please hold my arm." He stuck out his left arm, and as all of the Delacours took hold, he said "Fawkes," and immediately a flash of fire and beautiful red and gold Phoenix was above them. "I need to be in my office now please Fawkes," and he grabbed a tail feather of the phoenix and with another fiery flash he and the Delacours found themselves in the Headmaster's office.

"Nor Mrs. Delacour, the fireplace is at your disposal," Professor Dumbledore said, "Is there anything else you might need? I have contacts in the Department of International Cooperation and with the ICW so if you need anything pushed quickly, let me know."

"Zank you."

Professor Dumbledore turned back to the Fleur and Gabrielle, "Have either of you heard of a pensieve?" When both of the ladies shook their heads no, "It is a device that allows a person to see copies of another person's memories. I would like to ask you to share your memories of what happened in the bond. I am hoping I might see something that might help us understand what is happening. I know it is very personal for Harry but I am sure he would put your safety first and want you to do this. Mr. Delacour, Gabrielle is underaged, so I would need your permission for this as well."

"Of course, anything zat will 'elp my daughters." Mr. Delacour said.

"I am willing professor, anything for 'Arry." Gabrielle said, "But what do I need to do?"

"And you Fleur?" Dumbledore asked.

"I...I don't like the idea of showing 'Arry's secrets. 'e never wanted to talk about 'is child'ood, but I also zink 'e would be in greater pain if something 'appened to Gabrielle or I if we didn't share zem." Fleur said. "I just 'ope 'e will forgive us."

"I am sure he will Fleur, or at least he will understand why you did it." The Headmaster said. "Now Fleur, I am going to ask you to go first. All I want you to do is close your eyes and think about what happened. Go slowly, try to remember every detail you can. Now while you are doing that I will be holding my wand next to your head, please do not panic. It is there only to copy the memory. You'll feel a chill in your head as it happens; again this is nothing to worry about. Now are you ready?"

Before Fleur could nod her readiness, Mrs. Delacour came over. "Headmaster, could you please allow ze Floo to azept a delegate from ze Veela Magical Institute. 'Er name is Rachelle Berceau, one of ze leading experts on Veela bonds."

"Of course." Professor Dumbledore said and with a quick wave of his wand at the fireplace it was accomplished. "It is done. She can come and go for the next forty eight hours. May I inquire if she is a full Veela?" He asked. "I only make the inquiry because if she is going to move around the castle, the other professors and I will need to take certain precautions. We have a castle full of young and shall we say impressionable boys that we need to make allowances for, for their safety of course."

"Zank you Professor. I understand your concern for your students; she is 'alf Veela like myself." Mrs. Delacour turned back to the fireplace and a couple of minutes later the green fire blazed higher and a very attractive silvery blond haired lady strolled out of it. After making her introductions to Mrs. Delacour she strolled over to Professor Dumbledore and in perfect english started. "Professor Dumbledore, I am very glad to finally get a chance to meet you. Your reputation is of course legendary. I am Professor Berceau of

the Veela Magical Institute. I understand we have an issue with a Veela bond?"

"Yes Professor Berceau—"

"Rachelle, please"

"Thank you. Please call me Albus. Let me introduce Mademoiselles Fleur and Gabrielle Delacour. We have both of these ladies trying to bond with a young man—"

"A simultaneous bonding?" Professor Berceau asked. "How did that happen?"

"It is a complicated tale of how it happened Rachelle," Professor Dumbledore said "but yes if you mean both ladies declared Harry their bondmate at the same time. More important though is the bond attempt has failed and we are running out of time."

"How much time?" Rachelle asked.

"Our resident Healer estimates eight hours or less." The Headmaster said.

"Why so little time?" Rachelle asked

"The initial bond attempt happened when the young man in question was magically exhausted. He was rendered unconscious for three days. We had to put the young women into a deep sleep to prevent the expiration of time while we waited for his recuperation." Dumbledore explained then continued. "Upon awaking we let the three of them enjoy an evening together since the initial bond was um, a one way commitment."

Ms. Berceau looked at the two young ladies in shock. "You didn't?"

Fleur and Grabrielle just nodded and tears came to their eyes.

"Don't be too harsh in your judgment until you can get the whole story Rachelle." Professor Dumbledore said. "There were a lot of issues that caused their declaration and most were not in the control of these ladies."

"Ok Albus, so what is the problem with the bond?" Ms. Berceau asked.

"Harry, that is the name of the young man who is to bond with them, Harry Potter—" Professor Dumbledore started.

"No, not THE Harry Potter?" Rachelle asked in disbelief.

"Yes, I'm afraid so." Professor Dumbledore said.

Rachelle turned to Fleur and Gabrielle, "Was that the reason for the—"

"Non," Fleur said defiantly while Gabrielle looked ashamed. " 'Arry, well 'e is the most wonderful, brave and caring person and 'e saved our lives and I...." Fleur's voice trailed off.

"Saved your lives? Well I am looking forward to the story. Now is the young— is Harry accepting the bond?"

"Oh yes, 'e even comforted me about it this morning." Gabrielle said a small smile appeared on her face as she remembered her time with Harry.

"Good, then let's get to the bottom of this issue and get you bonded to your young gentleman." Ms. Berceau said, then turning back to the Headmaster, "Do you know what happened or should I talk to your healer?"

"Madam Pomfrey is our healer. A most skilled woman who I think you should most definitely talk to." Dumbledore said, "But I was just going to share these ladies memories of what happened. Even though they have shared a very interesting telling of the events, I would like to see them for myself."

"You're not thinking of Legilimency while the girls are in bondstate are you? It could lead to further complications." Rachelle said.

"No, not Legilimency, I am planning on using a pensieve." Dumbledore said. "I keep one here in my office. Too many years, and too many thoughts to keep track of, I find myself using it more and more often."

"Oh, I'm sorry Albus. I just recently had a bad experience in a bond completion where someone tried....well never mind." Rachelle said.

"Quite all right, I prefer a professor who ensures the safety of their charges." Albus said. "I'm afraid from what these ladies have said; I might be ultimately responsible for this problem. Both in the original bond declaration and the failure of the bond. But before I rush off to take all the blame, I would like to visit the scene of the crime to see what can be done." Professor Dumbledore turned to Fleur, "Are you ready?"

"Yes 'eadmaster." Fleur said.

"Very well, now close your eyes and think of what happened. Remember to go slowly and exactly how it happened. Focus on as much detail as you can." Professor Dumbledore said quietly. As Fleur closed her eyes, he brought his wand up and laid it at her temple. A silvery white substance accumulated upon his wand. Professor Dumbledore brought up a vial and he allowed the substance to fall from his wand into it until finally Fleur's eyes opened and she said "Zats all of it."

"Thank you, now Gabrielle, can you do the same for me?"

"Yes 'eadmaster." Gabrielle murmured and walked over to him. Repeating the same advice and steps, a little while later Dumbledore had both memories, each in their own vial.

"Professor Berceau, I would like to look at these first." Dumbledore said holding up the vials, "But after that I will have you join me."

"Very well, may I speak to Fleur and Gabrielle to start to understand the situation?"

"Please do, the more you know the more you can help us through this." Dumbledore agreed. He poured the first vial into Pensieve and then he disappeared into the basin. After a few minutes he was back with unshed tears glistening in his eyes. He spent a few moments in silent consideration of the decisions he had made when it concerned Harry. He thought back to that night so many years ago. The uncertainty of what exactly had happened, all the deaths that were occurring, the almost certainty of a retaliation attempt against Harry and of course that prophecy. Harry's safety had been paramount

and being with his mother's family ensured his safety from the magical world and those that would cause him harm. He had even placed Arabella Figg in the area to watch over Harry, to ensure against exactly what seems to have happened. He knew that Arabella could sniff out an abused cat seven blocks away and would fight a hippogriff to save it and he had presumed she would be able to do the same for Harry. Yes she had mentioned he was withdrawn and shy, how he was chased and beat up by his cousin, and various minor instances of neglect he seemed to be suffering, but she had never indicated the abuse was to the level he had just seen. Even this past summer, Sirius had tried to tell him that something seemed off with Harry and his letters, but again he didn't consider it serious enough to check into. He now knew he had failed Harry. After a few more moments of consideration he turned to Rachelle, "I apologize for not taking you with me the first time, but I needed to make sure that there weren't...er...other problems that show themselves."

"What do you mean Albus?" Rachelle Berceau asked.

"You are of course familiar with Harry Potter's scar?" seeing Rachelle nod, Dumbledore continued, "well there are...issues with his scar that I thought might have caused this to occur." Of course he was concerned that the Horcrux he suspected and feared was in Harry was causing this problem, but there seemed to be no indications of Voldemort in what he had seen.

"What might these issues be?"

"Not something I can discuss, at least not in the present time." Dumbledore said. "But I saw nothing that would confirm my fears. Now I think it's time for you and me to venture together, but I will warn you, what you are going to see is quite disturbing. I knew there were some issues in his life, but I didn't know it was that bad in his home. Now are you familiar with the use of a Pensieve? All you have to do is put your face into the liquid and you will fall into the memory."

Rachelle just nodded and within a few seconds they both found themselves looking at the simple but beautiful two story house that was a part of Harry's mind. They saw Harry look at the house and then smile, they saw Harry take a first step toward the house, Then Gabrielle and Fleur came to him and start talking to him. Images of the abuse that Harry suffered flickered past with amazing speed,

then Gabrielle, Fleur and Harry took a step toward the house and the images of his relatives appeared, all calling out freak not letting Harry or the young women to get by. Finally they saw Harry become unresponsive and all went black and Rachelle and Albus were back in his office, both had looks upon their face that indicated they had witnessed something very unpleasant.

Rachelle was the first to speak, "Who were those people? Are they real or made up like the house?"

"Oh they're real." Professor Dumbledore said. "They are the only remaining relatives of Harry. He's lived with them for the last thirteen years. And I must take the entire blame for it. I placed him there when his parents died. I had good reasons for doing such, but I can see now that I should have acted sooner to protect him. But for now that is the past, and we must do what we can to protect the young man's future. Is there anything that you were able to discern from that review Rachelle?"

"The first thing I can say is his love is intact." Rachelle said. "And he..., well he has an over abundance of love to give."

"What do you mean?" Dumbledore asked.

"Understand that the bondimage, which we just witnessed, is a magically induced review of a person's heart." Rachelle explained. "There is no hiding the true love from the Veela magic. Now I've never seen one in a Pensieve before but extensive questioning in my research shows that normally the house would reflect the security and his heart would be inside of it, in something like a closet or a box, or wherever he usually stores his most prize possessions. But it seems Harry's heart is represented by the entire house we just saw. The golden glow is his love. As I said, if he is imagining this house to scale the love is far in excess than I have come across in my research. So with the love intact, if he and these two ladies can just get to his heart or the house and open the door and step in, I feel confident the bond will happen."

Fleur and Gabrielle were hanging onto every word spoken by Rachelle, they both knew that the hope for their future was centered on what this woman could do, at the last words that the bond could still happen that both turned to each other and shared a small smile of hope.

"What is causing him to imagine his relatives blocking his path?" Dumbledore asked.

"That's easy, self doubt. Those relatives of his seemed to have induced an inability in Harry to readily accept love, going so far as to almost reject it as possible. The irony of it, most likely it is the one thing he truly desires."

"But he just discovered his godfather. They have a loving relationship it seems." Dumbledore said.

"Really, and they spend a lot of time together?" Rachelle asked.

"Uh, no. There are complications and his godfather had to leave shortly after they found each other."

"So he finds a person who says they love him, and that person leaves very soon after." Rachelle stated. "That might have added to the damage. Harry was again told he was loved and that person disappeared."

"But they write all the time, and have seen each other a couple of times since then."

"Professor Dumbledore, The Veela bond is love, so love is what I specialize in." Rachelle started "You can't give love with words written on paper. You can show caring and support with such things, and as bad as Harry has been treated, he might think that is love. But it isn't. How many times has Harry been told he was loved to his face, shown he was loved with simple actions like a hug?"

"We did last night." Fleur said. " 'Aarry was most kind, but 'e did say zat ze kiss 'e and I shared was 'is first one."

"Well that is something. So we have to fight his self doubt." Rachelle said. "Does Harry have any close friends, someone he trusts completely?"

"He has two very close friends. They have been friends since they arrived in this castle." Professor Dumbledore said.

"Ron and 'Ermione?" Fleur asked. " 'E told us about zem last night. About zeir adventures zey 'ave shared."

Professor Dumbledore thought of Harry's two best friends and then a thought and a memory came to him. "Rachelle, can you join me in the pensieve one more time? I think we overlooked something very important."

"Sure, but what do you think we missed?" The half Veela asked.

"I prefer to show you. I'm hoping you can tell me what it means." A minute later the two of them were back in the memory as it was first starting. "I was concentrating on the events and didn't pay too much attention to the house last time, but look in that window on the left. There is a person there. See her?"

"But that is his heart, which means.... love. He loves her." Rachelle said. "Do you know who she is?"

"Most definitely, that Rachelle is Hermione Granger, the friend Fleur just mentioned." Dumbledore said and they found themselves back out in the office again.

"Albus, I think we need to speak to Miss Granger immediately." Professor Berceau said.

A/N Sorry for the cliff hanger. But I have been rewriting and tinkering with this chapter for so long I want to post it just to make me move on. I will try to get the next chapter posted within a week.

A/N – When it comes to the Pensieve I was unsure if you physically enter the basin, but everything seems to point that your entire body is pulled into it. In Book 6, Harry feels his feet leave the floor when entering the Pensieve.

BTW in one of my chapters to come (possibly when the summer comes around in the story) - Sirius and the Twins will have a go at the Dursleys.

Chapter 8

Hermione Granger was sitting in the Great Hall eating a late breakfast and she was worried. Her life and the life of her best friend, Harry Potter had turned upside down in the last four days. It had all started when Fred and George had come to the library to tell Ron and her to go to Professor McGonagall's office and as far as she could tell, it would end sometime this morning when Harry would bond with Fleur and Gabrielle. Ever since Harry had mentioned the bond she had been thinking of her friendship with him and Ron. She knew it would never be the same. Hermione knew that Harry would be torn between two worlds, the life and friendships he had and the life he would lead once (or have already happened) the bonding was complete. She wondered if Harry would leave Hogwarts and attend Beauxbaton. Of her friendships, Hermione only really had Harry, Ron and Ginny as friends. If Harry wasn't there, could she and Ron continue being friends? Hermione had examined her second friend, analyzing him as if he was an Arithmancy problem. Ron had several flaws and one of the most serious was jealousy. He has always been jealous of Harry, of his fame and money and possibly his courage. The jealousy simmering right below the surface and like earlier in the year when Harry's name had come out of the Goblet, it would rise up and take control of Ron, turning him into someone that truly was to be despised. If Harry did leave, would she be the brunt of that jealousy? Would Ron be jealous of her intelligence, of her ambitions, jealous of any new friends she made? Most likely he would she had concluded. Also what would their friendship be based on if it did continue? She and Ron had absolutely nothing in common except friends with Harry. She didn't share any of the passion he had for Quidditch or Chess and Ron went out of his way to belittle the things she loved like books and learning. It went back to another of his flaws, what Ron didn't like he made fun of. No, she concluded, if Harry did leave, she and Ron would have a falling out and it would never be the same again. Hermione would have to look elsewhere for friendship.

Also in the last four days she had considered her relationship with Harry and what it meant to her. Hermione remembered her childhood, fraught with loneliness. As a young child, she had endured all of the other children called her names like geek, bookworm, and beaver face. She was bullied and made fun of on a constant basis. This just made Hermione lose herself in more books and a desire to prove she was better than they were. When she

found out she was a witch and would be coming to a school with other witches and wizards she thought for sure she would be accepted. She would finally fit in. But when she got to Hogwarts she had found the same thing. Name calling, bullying and rudeness and she had been miserable, even more so since she didn't even have her parents to comfort her. Most nights she had cried herself to sleep. But all of that had changed on Halloween in her first year. Sitting in the bathroom crying over another insult from a classmate, she had heard the bathroom door open and the entire bathroom had filled with a stench. When she had looked out of the stall she had been in for hours, she saw a huge monster staring at her. A Troll had entered the bathroom. Fear like she had never known had overcome her. At that moment she knew she was going to die that night in that bathroom. Then a miracle had occurred, Harry Potter was there, yelling and trying to distract the troll. Then he had done the bravest and most stupid thing in the world, he had jumped on the back of the troll to save her. Nobody had ever come to her rescue before. Nobody had ever stood up to bullies for her or prevented people from calling her names except for teachers of course. Here was somebody attacking a creature almost three times his size for her. Risking his life and he was doing it purely to save her. Once the troll had been knocked out, Hermione had looked into Harry's eyes and for the first time in her life she saw a look of kindness and of friendship looking back. From that moment on, she would have done anything for Harry. She finally had a friend who cared about her. Over the last three years, they had been inseparable, well outside of the time with the broom last year. Hermione, with Harry's and Ron's friendship had blossomed into a confident young woman.

But for all of the friendship, Hermione knew she had failed Harry badly over the years. In the first year, when they had gotten to the potions in their pursuit of the stone, she should have realized that the small bottle that allowed you to go on must be self-refilling. Someone else had already been through there by evidence of the bent wings on the key and the knocked out troll, but the single dose bottle was full. They could have put the contents into something and waited for the bottle to refill and both could have gone after the stone. But Hermione had not figured that out in time and she had left Harry to fight Quirrell alone. She had never mentioned it to Harry, but she still felt guilty even now years later. Then in the second year, she should have just told Harry what she thought the monster was before going to library to verify it. But because she needed to prove everything, she had ended up petrified and it was another month

before the answer she already knew was discovered again. Had it been discovered earlier, then maybe Harry and Ginny might not have nearly died.

Last year was different. Though she almost lost Harry's friendship over the broom that was delivered, she wouldn't have done it differently. It was a tough decision but it came down to that fact she would prefer Harry mad at her and alive than being her friend until the broom caused his death. If that broom had caused him harm or killed him, and she hadn't acted, she wouldn't have been able to live with herself. But the friendship survived and this time she was with Harry at the end. He finally had someone beside him when he faced the challenges to save his godfather and it had been her.

This year brought more challenges, though she had helped him get through the first task with the summoning charm, it was her last failure that for four days had gnawed at her. Of course until yesterday she didn't realize the enormity of the failure. She had just presumed he once again had risked his life to save another and had almost died because of it. Hermione had mentally beat herself up thinking that if she had just found something different for him to use like the bubblehead charm or something else or if she hadn't agreed to be Victor's hostage and went back to help Harry, maybe everything in the lake would have played out differently. That evening while lying awake in her bed, Hermione had pledged herself to never fail Harry again. It was during that pledge that Hermione had realized that Harry had become the most important person in her world, and in that realization she found that Harry was more than a friend, he was someone she loved. She had planned on to start hinting it to him as soon as he was well, she even took his hand yesterday and for a brief moment she had seen something in his eyes that had given her hope that he might feel the same. Then she had found out about the bond, and that Harry really didn't have a choice in accepting it and her thoughts of them being together were dashed into a million pieces along with her heart. Harry had come to her for help to get ready for his dinner and of course she wouldn't let him down. Hermione eyes watered again as she thought of the last time she saw him last night, walking to a dinner for him to acquaint himself with two girls he didn't know but would spend the rest of his life with. Once he had left last evening, the girl who knew Harry the best went to her bed and cried herself to sleep again wondering what might have been.

While Hermione was lost in her thoughts, back in Professor Dumbledore's office another conversation was underway concerning her and Harry.

"You had asked if Harry had anyone he trusts completely" Professor Dumbledore said to Professor Berceau. "What do you have in mind?"

"As I said earlier, we have to fight his self doubt." Rachelle said, "Obviously we cannot actually cure the self doubt within the time we have. But if there is someone who he trusts absolutely, there is a technique to send the person into the bondimage during the bonding. That person would guide Harry and his bondmates to his heart. If he trusts this person enough, he should be able to ignore the images of self doubt and move on." Rachelle turned to Fleur and Gabrielle. "I know you tried, but as of right now he doesn't trust you enough. When you are bonded, that trust is something you will be able to build."

"I understand." Fleur said, while Gabrielle just nodded.

"So this Hermione, is that what you said her name was?" Rachelle asked.

"Yes, Hermione Granger." Dumbledore said.

"Could we talk to her? To see if she thinks Harry trusts her."

"Of course. Fawkes, could you take this note to Minerva in the great hall." Dumbodore said to the Phoenix sitting on his perch, and quickly jotted a message to Minerva. "Wait for her, if she says Miss Granger is not there, find her for me please. This is most urgent."

The phoenix took the note and was gone in a flash of fire and a second later he appeared in the great hall and the majestic phoenix circled the great hall once before landing next to the deputy headmistress.

Hermione was still lost in thought when she felt a hand on her shoulder. She immediately looked up hoping to see Harry but found herself looking at Professor McGonagall.

"Miss Granger, you need to go with Fawkes to the Headmaster's office. According to this note, it is extremely urgent and has to do with Harry."

"Harry? Fawkes?" Hermione said not taking in too many of the words. Then she noticed the red and gold phoenix flying toward her.

"Yes, just grab one of Fawkes' tail feathers when he offers them." Professor McGonagall said.

When Fawkes stopped and hovered right over Hermione's head, she reached up and gingerly took a feather in her finger, and instantly she found herself weightless, and being pulled out of her seat. With two flaps of Fawkes wings and a flash of fire, she found herself standing in the Headmaster's office stunned at what just happened.

"Excellent Fawkes, thank you. And thank you Miss Granger. Please sit down he have much to discuss." Professor Dumbledore said.

Hermione was till blinking trying to adjust to the abrupt changes in the last minute. Then finally she found herself "Professor McGonagall said this was about Harry?" Hermione said and then seeing Fleur and Gabrielle, "Is there something wrong with the bonding? How is Harry? Is there anything wrong with him?"

"Please sit," Professor Dumbledore said again. "So you know about the bonding? May I ask how?"

"I ran into Harry when he was coming to your office yesterday," Hermione said as she took a seat next to Fleur and Gabrielle. "He told me."

"Did he tell anyone else?" Professor Berceau asked

When Hermione looked questioningly at the Veela professor, Dumbledore spoke up, "I apologize, Miss Granger, this is Professor Rachelle Berceau of the Veela Magical Institute."

"So there is a problem?" Hermione asked.

"Yes there is Miss Granger. I apologize if some of my questions are blunt or do not seem to apply but we have little time left to work

around the problem and complete the bond." Rachelle said. "Did Harry mention it to anyone else?"

"Uh, no." Hermione said. "He actually lied to our other friend to get him to leave so he could tell me."

Rachelle looked significantly at Professor Dumbledore, then turning back to Hermione. "That's good. Miss Granger, do you think Harry trusts you? I mean completely trusts you, even to put his life in your hands?"

Hermione sized up the person speaking to her, and then she turned to Professor Dumbledore who gave her a nod. She returned her gaze back to Professor Berceau. "He has before, but it all depends on the context of the problem."

"What do you mean?"

"In our first year, we came across a logical puzzle." Hermione looked over at Dumbledore again to make sure he wanted her to continue, when he didn't object she continued. "It was a series of potions, some were poison, but there was a logical solution. Harry believed me and drunk the potion I told him was the solution and it was correct. Had I been wrong Harry might have died, so yes he trusts me as long as he hasn't already made up his mind. When he thinks he is right, then nothing anyone says will change his mind."

"What about emotionally?" Professor Berceau asked. "Does he trust you at an emotional level?"

"What..what do you mean?" Hermione asked with redness coming up in her cheeks.

"Would he take your advice or suggestions when it comes to emotions?"

"I don't know. I would like to think so but he is very complicated when it comes to emotions."

"How do you mean?"

"Harry will give of himself but never seems to want to take from people." Hermione said.

"That sounds about right. Miss Granger, in your opinion who does Harry trust the most in the world?"

Hermione started going through the people Harry knew until she finally came up with a list of three people Harry would trust. "He would trust Professor Dumbledore,"

"Ah.. I think in this case he might not, as lot of the problems Harry is enduring right now can be laid at my feet. I take full responsibility for them and I will speak directly with Harry when time permits concerning them." Dumbledore said. "Also Miss Granger if you were thinking he might trust his well behave dog, that might not work in this case either."

Hermione looked at the aged Headmaster, "Well in that case," She started as she bit her lower lip, "it would be me."

"Miss Granger, what do you know of the Veela Bonding process?" Rachelle asked her.

"I read some things about the bond itself, but not about the process of the actual bonding" Hemione replied.

Rachelle explained the bondimage process and the heart and the entry required to complete the bond. "But Harry can't get through his self doubt that someone would love him."

"And how can I help?" Hermione asked.

"There is a way to put you in the bondimage with Harry and the Delacours, and we hope he trusts you enough to overcome those doubts." Rachelle said. "If he does, you will be able to lead them through the uh..obstacles."

"Does Harry know about what you're asking me to do?" Hermione asked.

"Not yet. I understand he was unconscious again when they left the hospital to come here to request my help." Professor Berceau said. "We have been trying to get as much in place as we can since time is running out. If you agree to help, we would want you to see the

memory of the bonding process and what went wrong before so you will know what to expect."

"I would do anything for Harry, Professors, but he has to want me too." Hermione said. "Can you bring him here or let me go there and talk to him?"

Professor Berceau spoke up, "Let's go to the Hospital Albus. We can see if Harry is awake and I can talk to your Nurse at the same time. I would like to verify the time left anyway. We can bring Harry back here if he is better since this is where the pensieve is. I also suggest we leave the young women here together. Give them a chance to talk among themselves. A familiarity between them now will help in the bondimage."

"Certainly." Professor Dumbledore said. "Mr. and Mrs. Delacours, do you want to join us or maybe have a quick bite to eat in the Great Hall?"

The elder Delacours didn't look like they wanted to leave their daughters, but after a few seconds of staring between them and Professor Berceau they decided they would head for the Great Hall. Professors' Dumbledore and Berceau left shortly after they headed for the Hospital wing."

When everyone was gone, Hermione, Fleur and Gabrielle just looked at each other for a couple of minutes until finally Fleur said "I..I want you to know that I do love 'arry, Miss Granger and zat I am truly sorry. I know 'e is your friend."

"Please call me Hermione. I am glad for Harry. I..I hope it all works out." Hermione said. "If Harry wants my help, I will do everything I can."

" 'e spoke about you a lot last night." Gabrielle said. " 'e told us you 'ad saved 'is life. You kept 'im safe from ze Devil's snare and zen 'e said zat 'ad you not figured out about ze Basilisk 'e would not 'ave known what was in store for 'im and probably would 'ave died in the chamber."

"If I had told someone about what I thought it was before getting petrified, he might never have had to go into the Chamber." Hermione responded. "Did he tell you about the Troll he saved me

from in the first year? How he jumped on the back of it and his Wand got shoved up its nose?"

For the next few minutes they exchanged stories about what Harry had said happened and what Hermione's versions were. Hermione started realizing the blond haired Fleur she had detested earlier in the year was not the same woman who sat near her. When she asked Fleur about it, Fleur explained to how degrading it is to be constantly stared at by men who didn't care what she was like only what she looked like so she had a different personality with friend.

"You were quite beautiful at ze Yule Ball. Maybe I should have traded partners with you. Davies drool was getting to me." Fleur said. "Zough why didn't 'arry ask you?"

Hermione explained about Harry's crush on Cho Chang and then not asking anyone until the last minute.

" 'ermione," Fleur said, "I zink you need to know somezing. You will see it in ze bondimage soon, so if I tell you now it will be less of a shock." Fleur picked up Hermione's hand. " 'arry might 'ave 'ad a crush on someone else, but 'e is in love with you."

It took a few seconds for Fleur's word to register. "What..How do you know? Are you sure?"

"I didn't notice it when it was 'appening but Professor Berceau and your 'eadmaster was talking about it." Fleur explained. "You are in 'arry's 'eart in bondimage and zat can only means 'e loves you. 'as 'e never told you?"

"Uh..no. I..I don't know what to say." Hermione said. "He...we..uh...no. We have just been friends."

"I'm sorry if I upset you." Fleur said. "I just zought you should know. But maybe I shouldn't 'ave said anyzing."

"That's ok." Hermione said. "But how do you feel about it? He's going to be your bondmate. Is it going to be a problem if I'm his friend?"

" 'Ermione, I want 'Arry to be 'appy. I've seen 'is pain and suffering 'e's endured in 'is life." Fleur said "If I could undo ze bond I would

and let 'im be 'appy with you. Gabrielle and I could choose not to complete ze bond, but I zink 'arry would never forgive 'imself if we did zat. So don't even zink for a second that Gabrielle or I would ever stop you two from being friends. I just 'ope someday you can call me a friend as well."

"Me too, 'Ermione." Gabrielle said.

"Even if I were to tell you that I realized I was in love with Harry as well?" Hermione asked wanting to completely clear the issue between them.

"Even zen." Fleur said. "Just please don't be jealous of us when we are bonded with 'Arry."

"I'll try not to be." Hermione said. "So have you and Harry discussed where you'll be living?"

" 'ere of course." Gabrielle said. " 'Arry is giving us our lives by agreeing to ze bond, ze least we can do is not take 'is life away."

Hermione smiled, she knew things would be different between her and Harry but at least he would still be around and his bondmates want to be her friends as well. Ron definitely would not be able to tolerate the bonding. Harry with two beautiful girlfriends bonded to him? Ron would be purple in rage and jealousy within a week if not a day.

The conversation continued on until the door opened allowing Professor Dumbledore, Professor Berceau and Harry to re-enter the room. As soon as he entered Hermione was out of her seat, launching herself at him giving him a hug that would make Molly Weasley jealous. And around both of them came the arms of Fleur and Gabrielle.

"Can't breathe" Harry wheezed, then seeing the first person to hug him, "Hermione what are you doing here?"

"What else do I do, I'm helping you." Hermione said with a smile. "That is if you want me too. But how are you? I've been very worried."

"I've had better days. " Harry said then turning to Fleur and Gabrielle, "I'm sorry. I want you to know that I am not consciously fighting this bond."

"We know 'Arry." Fleur said.

"And I think we have a way to get you bonded Harry." Rachelle said. "But I have one question to ask you. Do you trust Hermione?"

Harry looked confused and then looked at Hermione before responding, "I trust her with my life. I would give my life freely to protect her."

"Harry you know what you saw in your bondimage, would you let Hermione see those images? We have a pensieve here that will show her Fleur's memories of what happened." Professor Berceau asked.

"Why? What is her part in this?" Harry asked. "It isn't that I don't want her too, I...I just don't want it to burden her."

"Harry, how many burdens have you borne of mine," Hermione asked. "How many times have you protected me? Let me help you now. Professor Berceau thinks I can help in your bondimage."

"How? What?" Harry asked confused.

Rachelle spent several minutes explaining how they would put Hermione into the bondimage with Harry and the Delacours, how she hoped Harry would let Hermione guide him through the obstacles he faced and to his heart.

Harry turned to Hermione, "Are you sure you want to do this?"

"Harry, I..I would do anything for you. Now, tomorrow, forever, all you have to do is ask." Hermione said.

"Thanks, I..I..thanks Hermione." Harry replied.

"Hermione, why don't you and Fleur view the pensieve together. She can tell you what you are seeing." Professor Berceau said. In the meantime, Professor Dumbledore, I need to request two full Veela's

to join us from the institute. I will need their magic to push Hermione into the bondimage when it's time."

"Of course. Make any arrangements you need and let me know when it's time for them to come through."

Hermione and Fleur went over to the Pensieve, Fleur told Hermione what to do and they felt themselves falling into the white silvery memory. A few minutes later they were back and Hermione was visibly shaken. She walked over to Harry and put her arms around him and said softly, "None of that is your fault, nor would it ever come close to making me think less of you. But I also think you now have three witches who plan on hexing your Aunt and Uncle to oblivion at the soonest opportunity." Harry looked into Hermione's brown eyes, and she continued, "I am thinking of some very creative curses at the moment."

"But you can't do magic there," Harry said. "You would get in trouble."

Hermione walked back over to Fleur, "Fleur, I do believe you are of age as you're in the Tri-Wizard? If I tell you which curse I want on each of his relatives, would you do the honor of casting it for me?"

"Gladly."

Harry couldn't help but smile at the thought.

An hour later they were all back in the hospital wing, Harry back on his bed, Fleur and Gabrielle on either side of him holding his hands. Hermione was sitting on the bed as well holding the free hands of Fleur and Gabrielle. The two full Veela's were on either side of the bond, each of their hands were on top of the bonding people's hand. Once again, Fleur and Gabrielle brought up Harry's hand and kissed it and released the magic into the bond. This time, the magic came from the Veela's as well and the golden glow surrounded Hermione as well.

Harry once again found himself in front of the house of his dreams. Hermione came over and stood beside him, "It is a beautiful house Harry." As she looked at it, she saw the window into the Library and saw herself sitting there. Fleur had pointed it out to her in the memory and let her know what it meant. Hermione was unsure if

she should ask Harry about it. A moment later Fleur and Gabrielle came up beside them, each taking Harry's hand in theirs.

"Lead the way Hermione." Harry said.

Hermione started toward the house with the bondmates right behind her, but again they had only gone a couple of steps when the images started once again, Vernon Dursley, Dudley, Petunia, Aunt Marge all yelling "freak". Hermione told Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle to hold onto her, and she pushed her way through but a few steps further she couldn't move, the images were closing in again. She turned to Harry who was getting a panicked look on his face, "Trust me Harry, please trust me," she said but she knew it was going to be a losing battle. One thing came to mind to try, she pull Harry close and kissed him, lips to lips as deeply as she could. The kiss might be only in the mind but it felt as real as it could. Everything around them froze and became silent. Harry looked at her.

"Why...what?"

"Because I love you Harry and I'm not going to let you fail." Hermione said as tears were welling in her eyes. "I realized you are the most important person to me Harry and I want you to be happy. Get rid of your doubts Harry. Trust me Harry, I love you, Fleur loves you and so does Gabrielle. You deserve happiness, you deserve love. Let Fleur and Gabrielle give it to you."

Harry looked at Hermione and then at Fleur and Gabrielle, he saw the love, he felt the love and the images of the Dursley's faded and nothing remained except Harry, Fleur, Gabrielle, Hermione and Harry's heart.

When they got to the house, they stopped on the porch and Harry reached for the door as Hermione turned to leave.

Harry looked at the bushy hair woman walking away from him. "Hermione." He called to her.

She turned and looked back at him, eyes once again wet with tears.

"So this is the price I have to pay? The price for being Noble?" Harry asked her. "To give up the one person who's always been there for me?"

"I'll always be there for you Harry." Hermione said. "Always. No matter where life takes us, I'll always love you. Fleur and Gabrielle also love you. Believe in them and let yourself be happy." Once again she turned to leave.

Fleur looked at her sister who gave her a little nod, "Wait 'ermione." Fleur said to Hermione, when she turned back once again, Fleur said, "You can join us if you want."

"What do you mean?"

"You can bond with 'Arry as well. 'e loves you and you love 'im."

"I...I couldn't. I'm not Veela." Hermione said.

"No, but you are 'ere because of Veela magic. Ze bond would form if you join us." Fleur explained.

"But why? Why are you asking me? He's your bondmate."

"Because I truly want 'arry to be 'appy. Zat's what love is. 'e is giving us 'is future to save our lives, zis is our way of giving something back to 'im." Fleur said. " 'e will love me and Gabrielle someday, we know zat, but 'e loves you now. In ze bond we will share zat love 'e 'as for you. Gabrielle and I are willing to share. Right my sister?"

"More zan anything else, I want 'Arry to be 'appy. Join us 'Ermione." Gabrielle replied. "You can be my second big sister."

"But I'm only fifteen years old, I don't know if I can commit myself to a lifetime." Hermione said.

"It's your choice, 'Ermione." Fleur said "We want you to, but you 'ave to want to also. Do you really love 'Arry? And can you accept Gabrielle and I as sisters sharing ze same man, to share ze same 'usband someday."

"I..I do love him." She looked at Harry, "I do love you. Do you want me Harry?"

"You have been a part of my life for years Hermione, and I really do not ever want to think of a day when you aren't. Without this bond I

don't know what would have happened between us, but If my bondmates are willing I would love for you to join us but only if you truly want it and accept Fleur and Gabrielle as sisters."

Hermione turned and came back to Harry and kissed him one more time, she felt him return the kiss and the kiss deepened. The love the two of them had for each other became more and more evident. When the kiss ended she looked into Harry's eyes, "Are you really sure Harry? Can you put up with me for a lifetime?"

"As many lifetimes as you can put up with me." He replied. "I'm sure."

Hermione turned to Fleur and Gabrielle, "Are you really sure?"

"Yes." They each said, both smiling.

Hermione turned back to Harry, "Yes Harry I choose to bond, but one condition."

"What might that be?"

"You have to tell my parents." Hermione said with smirk.

Harry jaw dropped, and then he smiled. "Fine, but it's your fault if they kill me." Turning toward the house Harry opened the door, Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione hugged each other close and entered Harry's heart together.

Back in the Hospital Wing, the people watching the bonding saw the glow start to disappear from the bondmates and smiles broke out on their faces. Harry opened his eyes and the first thing he felt was a pouring of sunshine in his heart. At least that is what it felt like to him. He could feel the love and happiness coming into him. He also could feel relief and uncertainty. He looked at Hermione who was looking back at him and he could tell that was where the uncertainty came from. He could also hear a jumble of thoughts rushing through his mind he could hear random thoughts from Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione. But he couldn't understand the words since it was all on top of each other.

Rachelle asked the question all of the people surrounding the bed wanted the answer to, "Was the bonding successful?"

Harry's hands rushed to his head as the question echoed throughout his brain. Harry realized he heard the question not only from his own ears, but through his three bondsmates link as well. An echo of the question bounced among his brain.

Rachelle immediately knew the problem and started pulling Fleur and Gabrielle toward Madam Pomfrey's office, Fleur pulled away and said "Bring 'Ermione too, she's bonded as well."

At that statement another verbal pandemonium broke out causing Harry's head to feel like it would explode as the words being spoken echoed throughout his brain. Harry's bondmates could feel his pain and realizing they were causing it right now, followed Professor Berceau into Madam Pomfrey's office. Once there, she put her fingers to lip suggesting they be quiet, then returned to the rest of the people surrounding the bed.

Without the echoing of the voices coming from his bondmates Harry could start to understand the questions and comments being posed.

"What is going on?" Professor Dumbledore asked Professor Berceau, "Why did the ladies need to leave the room, and why is Harry in pain? Did something else go wrong?"

"No, I think the bonding completed fine this time, right Harry?" Rachelle asked the young man in the bed.

Harry nodded.

"Remember Albus, they hear each others thoughts now." Rachelle said, "He is hearing everything they think, so when they hear something he hears it as well right now. Now in a normal person to person bonding, the echo is minor annoyance for a short time, but in this case he has two, " then looking over at Harry, "Or three bondmates. Harry did Hermione join the bond?"

Harry nodded again.

"Three bondmates," Rachelle said "so think of it as Harry currently is hearing with four sets of ears right now, and dealing with the random thoughts he and his bondmates have. The echos are much more severe for him at the moment."

"You say for right now? What does that mean?"

"The mind is a wonderful thing Albus." Rachelle said, "Harry's and his bondmate's minds will learn and adapt. With the Veela magic it will develop means to shift and sort through the information, recognizing what is meant for him, and what isn't. It will also learn to protect itself as it protects the bond."

"You mean like Occlumency then?" Professor Dumbledore asked.

"Much better than Occlumency. His mind will be protected subconsciously by the Veela magic and of love from the bond." Rachelle said. "With three bondmates, the level of that protection may very well be unimaginable."

"Why does the number of bondmates make a difference?"

"Think of it in terms of normal magic in a dueling situation." Rachelle said going into her Professor lecture mode. "Say you were dueling a single person and you only had to protect yourself. Your offense and defense is pretty straight forward, a single shield to protect you and single spells to cast. That represents a normal Veela bond of two people. You have to defend your mind from the constant barrage of thoughts while also keeping the connection going and finding the thoughts meant for you and allow your thoughts out to your bondmates. Now what if you had to protect another person in that duel and you had two people attacking you at the same time. That is a much more complex situation, a more powerful shield along with more fluid defensive strategies, and you would need more spells to cast and know who to direct those spells at. That would be similar to bonded mind having to deal with two bondmates. Now consider in that duel, what happens if you had to protect two other people and fight off three people attacking at the same time. That is the complexity that Harry's mind will come to grips with. I would daresay that no one, not even the most skilled legilimens would get past that complexity of protection. But it will take a few days depending on Harry's willpower."

Professor Dumbledore nodded his understanding.

Rachelle turned to everyone in the room, "Obviously the bonding completed successfully." She could see the visible signs of relief in

the faces of the elder Delacours, "It does seem that Hermione Granger joined the bond while in bondimage, so it is a four person bond. We will tackle that issue later when we can speak to them all at once. Now for the time being, please only talk to one of the young women at a time and away from Harry. Take pity on the young man," She continued. "After all he now has to deal with three girlfriends, and that can't be easy." She then pointed to the two full Veelas who had help. "Please thank these two wonderful people who helped make this possible."

Harry was feeling better as his head cleared. He could still hear the chatter of the random thoughts of his bondmates, he could feel the mixed emotions they felt and it was still very confusing. But then he heard it clearly through the rest of the chatter, "I love you 'arry." Those words from three distinct voices echoed throughout his mind, he looked over at Madam Pomfrey's office and saw his three bondmates all smiling at him. He smiled back at them, "I love you too." And he meant it. He realized his love for Hermione was radiating through all of the bonds and could not isolate one from the other. "We can feel it" came a response he was sure was Fleur. Harry realized that they could hear every thought he had. "My life just got very interesting." He thought, and three distinctive responses came agreeing to that sentiment.

Harry was sitting in an armchair contemplating his life since the second task of the Tri-Wizard Tournament. To say it was surreal would be an understatement. From being woken up by his friend Dobby the house-elf and making a mad dash to the lake edge, to being love-bonded to three very beautiful women had taken his world and turned it inside out. It had been nine days since that morning Dobby had found him in the library. For three days after the task he had been unconscious and another day to get through the bond. Now for the last five, he and his bondmates had been in the family visiting rooms for the hospital wing. It was only yesterday when all of them could sit in the common room together without the girls wearing their earmuffs. It had been Hermione's idea to wear the ear protection that kept students safe from the mandrakes cries if they were going to be in the same room together. Harry remembered how cute they looked in their earmuffs. Gabrielle was especially adorable in the pink fluffy ones. As Harry thought that the youngest of his bondmates looked over at him and smiled.

"I'll put zem back on if you want 'Arry."

"You're beautiful with or without them Gabrielle." Harry responded to her. The smile she already had widened a bit more.

If someone had told Harry ten days ago what he would be experiencing right this moment in his life he would have considered them crazier than Professor Trelawny. There's a thought. Wonder if she could ever have predicted something like this. Harry grinned as he thought of his next Divination homework. "I will be love bonded to three beautiful Witches by the next full moon." Definitely original. But he was bonded and it was to three beautiful Witches and Harry never felt more alive in his life. The constant feeling of love that poured into him from the bond, filling all the cracks that had been devoid of care from people, had left him feeling satisfied? Alive? As often as he kept trying to put a word to it, nothing fit. The closest he really came was complete. He felt complete, but even that word didn't cover what he was feeling. Ten days ago he would have exploded in anger at the thought of the two Delacours forcing their magic on him. Six days ago he understood why they did it, but still felt resentment but now he never wanted to lose the parts of him that the bonds have given him. He was happier now than he had ever been in his life.

The last five days had been the strangest Harry had ever experienced and for the boy-who-lived who had one of the most unique lives known to the wizarding world that was saying something. When the Veela magic had first started protecting Harry's and his bondmate's minds it had been a frightening experience. Though all of them had some issues, Harry suffered the worst. The first day he had spent suffering from symptoms of nausea and hallucinations as sights, sounds, and even smells and tastes fluttered in and out of his mind. Professor Berceau, assured the women that though severe, the symptoms were not unexpected nor life threatening. She had explained that normally in a Veela bond between two people, the changes would be minor and would happen over a lengthier time period so the bonded pair wouldn't really notice anything. But with the four person bond, the changes had to happen much more rapidly to protect the bonded minds from the constant onslaught of so many background noises and thoughts.

The second day Harry had started to feel better but then Hermione's thoughts had just disappeared from his mind. Harry could always tell her thoughts since he was much more familiar with what she had experienced and the way she thought. When her thoughts had disappeared, he had almost panicked. He had called out to her mentally and her reassuring thoughts had responded to him instantly. "I'm still here love." Again it had been Professor Berceau who theorized that Harry's familiarity with Hermione had helped his mind cope with her bond connection first.

Across the room Hermione turned and looked at Harry, "Now and forever love, I'll never be more than a thought away."

The next day Fleur's constant mental presence had disappeared just like Hermione's had done previously. Harry had been ready that time, and just a simple thought "Fleur?" had brought back her "I'm 'ere my love.". And yesterday morning Harry's mind fell silent for the first time in four days. Again Harry had thought of the youngest of his bondmates, "Gabrielle?" and her immediate, " 'Arry, of course I'm 'ere." Had assured him all was well finally.

Professor Berceau had requested to be notified when the bond seemed to settle, and once she had joined them, they began to experiment on how the bond connections worked. The Veela professor was unsure herself to the exact extent since she had never studied a four person bond before. Over the next few hours

Harry had found he could talk to any or all of the women just by thinking of what he wanted to say. His mind automatically realized who he wanted to talk to and 'sent' it to that bond. He could even send a mental image of something in his mind to any or all of them. The biggest surprise to Professor Berceau and the bonded was that the women could talk mentally among themselves. Though what was happening became apparent when Harry laid down for a nap after starting to get headaches. Once he fell asleep the ability to talk amongst the women had stopped. Rachelle realized Harry's mind was acting as a subconscious relay between the women but only when he was awake. The four bondmates found they could block each other from listening in to their thoughts but found it to be extremely mental tiring to do so. Finally they experimented with sharing their thoughts. The thoughts of each person consisted to two different possibilities, the immediate and the memories. Harry found that if he concentrated fully on one of his bondmates he could actually experience everything they were as it happened, sight, sound, everything. He had found it unnerving to see himself through Gabrielle's eyes while feeling her feelings. For a small period it seemed to Harry he was in love with himself. His bondmates had found it extremely amusing when he mentioned it to them. Of course each woman could experience what Harry was doing as well, but they could not do it to each other. As for memories of past occurrences, though they couldn't delve into the memories of a bondmate, they soon found all they had to do was say or think a trigger which would bring the memory into an active thought which they then could experience. It was at that time they realized none of them could keep secrets from the others. As much as Harry had misgivings about it, he agreed with his bondmates, that they would never try to keep anything from the others. They all realized that the relationship they were going to have, required absolute trust among them all.

Mr. and Mrs. Delacour had wanted to come by as soon as the bond settled, but they were asked to give the bondmates a day to settle affairs among themselves. Harry did make one introduction before they started talking among themselves. After requesting Fleur and Gabrielle not to probe for a few minutes, he had requested Padfoot to join them.

Flashback – Previous afternoon padfoot had just joined them

" 'e is such a well trained dog, 'Arry." Fleur said as she scratched him behind the ear. "But why is 'e 'ere?"

Harry grinned at Sirius antics, as he was panting with his tongue hanging out. "Do either of you know about Sirius Black?" He asked.

"Ze Murderer? Cedric said 'e tried to kill you last year." Fleur said. "Zat 'e made it all the way to your dorm."

"Sirius is no murderer," Harry growled. "It was thought he was the one who betrayed my parents, but it was another of their friends. Sirius was accused and sent to prison without a trial. I would like both of you to close your eyes and bring up my thoughts of something that happened last year. Hermione was with me at the time so she already knows the story."

Harry started his memory in the shrieking shack after Sirius had transformed. Fleur and Gabrielle saw the confrontation between Sirius, Remus and Peter Pettigrew, he led it proceed until Harry was talking to Sirius when he asked him to come live with him. When it was over he said, "Now don't probe for a few minutes please."

"So he is innocent?" Fleur asked. "and he is your godfather?"

"Yes."

"But why tell us now?" Fleur said.

"Well I've met your family." Harry said. "And I thought you should meet mine. Sirius, if you would please."

Padfoot moved away from Fleur and a few seconds later Sirius Black stood before them. Fleur and Gabrielle had jumped back when the transformation started but quickly recovered.

"Sorry to startle you ladies." Sirius said.

"Are you alright?" Harry thought to his two Veela Bond mates. "I was trying to do this before you got to see something in my mind that might have startled you or you might not have understood." Then back out loud, "This is my biggest secret. Sirius is still wanted and it's instant Dementor's kiss if he is ever caught." All in the room saw Sirius's slight shudder at the words.

"But you 'ad ze animagus?" Gabrielle said "Zat should 'ave proven Mr. Black's innocence."

"The rat escaped unfortunately." Harry muttered. "And we ended up having to break Sirius out of the school right before a Dementor was called in for him."

"But 'ow?" Fleur asked.

"We'll tell you later on." Harry said and then looking at Hermione. "It will be an exciting tale of a Werewolf, Dementors and a lovable Hippogriff. You'll get an idea of what you got yourselves in for my becoming part of my life."

End Flashback

Harry thought back to the previous evening when he and Hermione did share the tale of the rescue of Sirius Black with Fleur and Gabrielle who were on the edge of their seat as the tale unfolded in their minds. They got to experience the thrill of riding a Hippogriff from the memories of Harry and of both the near death experience from Dementors and the later driving over a hundred of them off with his Patronus. Harry could feel the awe from all of the witches around him when they witnessed the Dementors being driven away. Even Hermione, who knew it had occurred, couldn't believe the raw energy of that Patronus. He couldn't help but blush as the three Witches stared at him.

Harry came out of his reverie of thoughts over the last five days. Looking over at his bondmates who had been discussing something important. Hermione looked over at Harry.

"Harry what do you think is going to happen when the school gets word of our bonding?" Hermione asked.

Up until that moment Harry really had only thought of the bonding and the far future of spending his life with these ladies, he really hadn't thought of tomorrow or next week. His first thought was too his friend though, "Ron's going to be jealous isn't he?"

Fleur caught a glimpse of Ron's image from Harry's mind and from what she had seen last night in the shrieking shack when she was

seeing Sirius being proved innocent. Her hand shot to her mouth. "I recognize 'im now. 'e asked me to ze ball. I was rude to 'im. I'm sorry 'Arry."

"I think you're even Fleur," Harry said, "right before our bonding, he wasn't the kindest talking about you and Gabrielle." Harry turned to Hermione. "Has he even been by to see us?"

"I don't know." Hermione said. "But yes Ron will be jealous, but what would Rita Skeeter do with this story? Especially if it gets out that.." Hermione smiled at her bond sisters. "It wasn't exactly your decision. You can see the headlines, 'Boy-Who-Lived trapped by Veela'. Fleur and Gabrielle would be run out of the country. Well Gabrielle anyway since Fleur still has to compete. You saw what she did to Hagrid."

"Merlin." Harry exclaimed, that was definitely something he hadn't thought of. He looked up at his two blonde Bondmates. "She's right. Skeeter is nasty." Then turning back to Hermione. "But what can we do?"

Hermione smiled. "We," She said going over and putting her arms around her two bond sisters, "have a plan."

"What kind of plan?" Harry asked nervously.

"We aren't going to tell anyone about the bonding. " Hermione said. "Not yet anyway."

"You mean I have to stay away from you?" Harry asked. "I..I don't want to do that."

"Of course not Harry."Hermione explained. "You are going to have a girlfriend, our lovely Gabrielle." Gabrielle blushed as she looked at Harry. "You saved her life so no one is going to think too much of her wanting to date you. Though once they hear about it, half the girls in the school might start throwing themselves in the lake whenever you are near them, hoping you rescue them as well." Hermione finished with a smirk.

"But..but..you and Fleur." Harry sputtered.

"Do you think anyone is going to think anything of me still being by your side Harry? Even when you're with Gabrielle?" Hermione asked. "I've been there for almost four years. You will always be my best friend. Harry, I know you love me. I can feel, hear, taste and smell it over the bond. If I look into my mind, I can even see it, so I don't have to kiss you every thirty seconds to make sure like some people do. Not to say I don't want to snog you senseless every thirty seconds." She grinned at the blush Harry had developed.

"And you?" Harry asked turning to Fleur. "What about you?"

"Me? I definitely want to kiss you until your toes are curled around your feet." Fleur said with a smile. "As for ze plan, do you zink I would let my baby sister go wander around wiz some English wizard wizout proper chaperoning? She is but zirteen." Fleur finished with a smile.

"So we still spend most of our time together, but the school only sees me dating Gabrielle?" Harry asked, summing up his understanding of the plan.

"Exactly." Hermione replied.

"But eventually we have to tell people about it, don't we? How else can I Marry..I mean for us to be together later in life?" Harry asked.

Fleur winked at Hermione, "Did 'e almost propose to us already?"

"But...I..." Harry sputtered helplessly.

All three women giggled. "Is 'e always zis easy?" Fleur asked Hermione.

"When it comes to women, most definitely." Then Hermione turned back to the blushing Harry. "To answer your question, Fleur and Gabrielle will invite you and me to stay with them during the summer and the bond will be announced during that time. Doesn't even have to be made in context to the Tri-Wizard. Plenty of time for the Daily Prophet to get over it before school starts back."

"So do I ever get a say in any of this?" Harry asked.

"Your job is to defeat basilisk, dementors, and dark wizards. We will take care of ze relationship." Fleur said. "Now you need to go get ready, our parents will be 'ere in a few minutes."

Harry had almost forgotten that the Delacours were due very shortly and the Grangers were coming later in the evening to have dinner. But before he left his bondmates he decided it was time to fight back a little. "You forgot one other thing I am suppose to fight." He said innocently.

"And what would that be?" Gabrielle asked.

"Giant Spiders." Harry said lightly, and put an image of Aragog and his brethren into their minds. He got a small amount of satisfaction as they were startled. But when he felt Gabrielle become frightened he was instantly sorry and went over and held her. "I'm sorry." He whispered to her "I shouldn't have done that. I was trying to be funny and it didn't work out that well."

"Was that.." Hermione started.

"Aragog..yeah. Nice pet isn't he." Harry replied then to Fleur and Gabrielle, "If ever our Care of Magical Creatures Professor offers to show you something interesting.....run away as fast as you can."

"Did you kill it?" Fleur asked.

"No, Ron and I barely made it out of there alive." Harry replied. "If you want I can show you those memories, but there are not pretty." He pulled Gabrielle closer, "Are you ok?"

She nodded at him, "You must zink I'm silly being afraid of zat."

"No I definitely don't think that." Harry replied. "I was terrified of it. I definitely should not have made you see it. Your sister maybe, but not you." The last he said as he smirked at Fleur. When Gabrielle looked up at him, he kissed her tenderly on the lips.

When Harry looked back up, he could see Fleur was smiling at him and Gabrielle. "When do I get to curl your toes 'Arry?" He heard Fleur ask with an innocent tone.

Harry swallowed nervously as he stood up to go to his bedroom. "Uh..later maybe."

"Non, I zink now is a great time." And Fleur stood up and intercepted him. She looked in his emerald green eyes and closed the final distance between their lips. Harry wasn't sure if his toes curled since he couldn't feel anything except the heat radiating from Fleur's lips and then her tongue was attacking his, he felt a nudge in his mind making suggestions of what would make the kiss better and he endeavored to fulfill those recommendations. As the seconds continued on, Harry's learning curved spike sharply and Fleur melted into his arms. Her thoughts as they finally broke away were he might be inexperienced but he had a lot of potential.

When the kiss finally ended Harry looked into Fleur's eyes and saw a look of love and of desire. He could feel how much she had enjoyed the kiss and how much she loved him. When their mutual eye contact finally ended, Harry looked to the other two bond mates and saw that they were both staring back at them and had felt some part of the kiss as both of them had a slightly dazed look on their faces.

Harry blushed when he heard Hermione in his mind, "Would you kiss me like that Harry?"

Harry walked over to his love, his best friend, and looked into her brown eyes. "Most definitely love." His lips touched hers and trying to remember what he had just done, he let the kiss develop into a deeper kiss, he felt the bond connection between them, felt what she liked most with the kiss and using that he made the kiss exactly how she wanted it to be. When the kiss finally ended, they both stood there with silly grins on their faces.

"My turn." Harry heard Gabrielle say happily as she rushed over to him.

"Remember she is only zirteen 'arry. I better see zose 'ands." Fleur said with a mental giggle.

Harry didn't hear much of that since his mind was locked into the lips and mind of Gabrielle. It took a little while for Harry to realize he needed to lead this kiss as Gabrielle was expecting him to show her

what needed to be done. The kiss didn't last as long as the one with Hermione but Gabrielle was still very satisfied.

If Harry had concentrated and listened to what the ladies were talking to each other about as he headed for the shower his male ego would have been inflated several times the size of the castle. Each of the ladies was sharing exactly how great the kiss they just had was.

By the time Harry had got out of the shower and dressed in fresh robes the Delacours had arrived to enjoy a lunch with their daughters and bond mates. When he arrived back in the common room, Mr. Delacour jumped to his feet and greeted him warmly. "Arry, Apolline and once again wish to zank you. You are definitely a part of our family now. We were just telling 'Ermione she should consider 'erself one of our daughters as well."

Apolline Delacour seemed to almost float over to Harry and wrapped him a delicate hug. "Our daughters 'ave been telling us about your last few days. So 'ow are you enjoying ze bond?"

"Mrs. Delacour," Harry started.

"Non, Apolline or even Maman please. None of zis Mrs. Delacour."

Harry smiled nervously and nodded before continuing "It's really only been a little more than a day since it settled, but I will tell you something even your daughters haven't got out of me yet." Harry felt the soft touches of each of his bond mates minds as each were wanting to know what he was about to say. "When I first woke up and found out about the bonding. I was frustrated and depressed." Harry gave a gentle reassuring thought to Fleur and Gabrielle. "But a single word kept coming to my mind that helped calm me. That word was family. You know my story. I have no family, but it is the one thing I have always wanted in life." Harry turned to his three bond mates. "I have that now; these three very special women are my family. We will spend our lives together, and that is everything I want. When I was talking to a special person in my life about what Fleur and Gabrielle had done he suggested that fate is giving me the happiness that it's kept from me for so long. After only this short time, I am starting to agree. Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione are all very special women, all are beautiful, all are intelligent, and all, for some reason I'll never fathom love me." Harry felt all three of his bond

mates have a respond with happiness and each thinking fiercely that they were going to giving Harry the happiness he deserved.

Mrs. Delacour could see that fate might have played a part in this. Though she personally had wished it had taken a lesser toll on her nerves. When she had found out how close to dying her daughters had come in that lake she had been horrified. Then to find out they both had declared the same bondmate had been staggering especially since both had done it without his permission. Apolline had rushed to the school to find her daughters' bondmate was unconscious because of the bond initiation and nothing the nurse could do to bring him out of his state. She had felt her daughters anguish. Watching them sit beside their chosen mate, concerned for his safety, crying over the fact they had initiated the bond without his agreeing to it and the uncertainty of their futures had broken her own heart. Apolline had watched her daughters given the heavy sleeping potion that sent them off to sleep while she and her husband had to sit and wait to find out their daughters' futures. Almost three days of pure misery. They had looked at the raven haired young man lying in the bed and wondered who was this boy who held their daughters' lives in his hand. As he laid there in the bed, he didn't look like he could take care of himself much less their two daughters. But then they had talked to the Hogwart's Headmaster, and to the Mr. Brown who was a friend of Harry's father. Both had told them Harry had strengths others could only imagine. They had described the young man as one of the most caring people they had ever known, but willing to go against insurmountable odds to protect others. They had provided instances of such strength. Surely they must have exaggerated the stories to make Apolline and her husband feel better. How could an eleven year old boy defeat a troll and Voldemort possessed person, how could a twelve year old kill a basilisk with only a sword. Professor Dumbledore had even shown them the ruby hilted sword that Harry had used in that endeavor. Then the young man had awakened, and had dinner with his daughters. The next morning Fleur had been deliriously happy about the night before. Telling how Harry had got down on his knee as he agreed to be their bondmate, recognizing the seriousness of the act and how they had enjoyed each others company. Seeing her daughter so excited about her bondmate gave Apolline and Alain so much happiness. They had never see her so happy. Then the actual bond itself, the difficulties that had ensued, and then finally the bond completion, only to find the third person who was acting as guide had joined the bond.

Now Apolline looked at the young man who had done so much and captured the hearts of both of her daughters, not to mention the heart of the beautiful young lady that Professor Dumbledore had said was the brightest Witch he has seen in many of years. Of all the things he had done, of all the fame he had, all he wanted was a family and love. Looking into the nervous emerald eyes of the young man, she could see the strength that was hidden behind them. She definitely could see why her daughters chose him, and she wholeheartedly approved. She might have wished only one of her daughters had bonded but at least they weren't fighting over him. She once again looked at the happiness in both of her daughters' eyes, and readily agreed; fate seemed to have done a pretty good job on both sides of the bond.

"Maman, Papa." Fleur started. "We would like to make a request of you. I know you probably want to follow tradition and acknowledge ze bond publicly. But we would like for you to wait."

"Why may I ask?" Alain Delacour responded.

"Zere are several reasons, but ze biggest one is to simplify matters for 'Arry." Fleur said.

When both elder Delacours turned to Harry he said "It was their idea, but they are looking out for me." He went on to explain what they wanted to do for the remainder of the school year and then make it seem like the bonding happened during the summer. "It gives us additional time to come to terms with the bond without the pressure of the publicity that a public acknowledgment would cause."

"Can 'Arry and 'Ermione visit us zis Summer Papa?" Fleur asked.

"Ma Petite, of course zey can." Mr. Delacour responded then turning to Harry and Hermione, "As I said you two are family, our 'ouse is yours."

"Thank you sir," Harry responded as he felt his cheeks blush.

Dobby showed up a little after that to set a lunch for them. They had a nice banter of conversation discussing various things including some stories of Fleur and Gabrielle when they were younger much to the younger Delacours embarrassment. Harry loved to see the

memories of his two bond mates when they were doing things they liked to do. He really started looking forward to a summer filled with gazing at the beautiful waters of the Mediterranean Sea. He just couldn't imagine water that never ended. He remembered the shack that his Uncle had tried to hide them in when the owls and letters were pursuing them but he never got to really see it through the storm.

" 'Arry." Fleur's thoughts came through. "Can I tell Papa about Sirius, I don't mean zat 'e is 'ere, but zat 'e is your godfather and zat you believe 'e is innocent. And zat 'e never got a trial."

"Why? What good would that do?" Harry replied.

"My father is ze ministère de député de magie, Harry. The Deputy Minister of Magic in France." She replied.

Harry's fork fell to the ground and he scrambled to retrieve it. "Your father is what?"

"You 'eard me 'Arry." Fleur responded back. "I'm sure 'e would let you know if anything can be done to 'elp 'im."

"Let me talk to Sirius first." Harry said. "It's his life."

"Ok, 'Arry, I just want to 'elp you." Fleur said with a hint of sadness.

"Fleur, I know and that means everything to me. Feel my thoughts and emotions. You know I'm not mad." Harry started. "In fact I would love to have an opinion outside of the government that sent Sirius to Azkaban in the first place. I just think it has to be Sirius' decision on who we tell."

Mr. and Mrs. Delacour recognized the look in the Harry and Fleur's eyes that they were talking to each other. "Is zere something you wish to share you two?" Apolline said looking the two of them.

Fleur looked a little embarrassed, "Not right now Maman."

The rest of the lunch passed with minor conversations but toward the end, one major topic came up, the future.

" 'ave you started discussing your futures yet?" Apolline asked. "Is it going to be 'Ogwarts or Beauxbaton?"

Before Harry could reply, Fleur responded. " 'Ogwarts Maman. Both 'Arry and 'Ermione attend 'ere, and I can get a job close by after zis year. Gabrielle can transfer 'ere and I can take up guardianship until she is of age or," Fleur looked over at Harry, "she gets married."

Harry felt every eye at the table turn toward him and his blush crept completely under his collar. Apolline laughed, "Don't do zat to 'im Fleur. Look at the poor young man."

Mrs. Delacour turned to Harry. "It is general accepted that you wait until she turns of age before marriage." She explained. "But you might find it difficult to wait zat long in zis situation."

"What..what do you mean?" Harry asked looking like he was ready to bolt.

"I zink you will find out shortly 'Arry." Mrs. Delacour said then changing the subject, "Gabrielle will transfer to 'Ogwarts." Turning to her youngest daughter. "Do you want to transfer for ze remainder of zis year, or let Madame Maxine teach you for ze rest of ze school year?"

"Actually she needs to wait until next year." Hermione spoke up. "Since we aren't announcing our bond until the summer, what would the reason be for her to transfer?"

"How about a little of both?" Harry asked. "We get the headmaster to allow her to attend classes here without making it a formal enrollment, say that because of her age it would be difficult to instruct her otherwise. Maybe even get her sorted into a house and let her sleep in a dorm. That way she can get comfortable to with Hogwarts and we don't have to announce anything about the bond. "

"Do you zink ze 'eadmaster will agree to zat?" Mr. Delacour asked.

"I think right now the Headmaster owes my bondmates and I too much to argue with it." Harry responded forcefully.

Had Harry been listening to the women's thoughts, he would have heard Hermione asking the other two bondmates if they heard how

protective Harry was of them already. She suggested they get use to it. Harry had committed to them and that he would move the earth and sea to protect them if it required it.

When the elder Delacours had left, Harry realized that he only had three more hours to live. Or at least that was his way of thinking since that was when Hermione's parents were going to show up for dinner. Professor Dumbledore was personally transporting them to Hogwarts so they could pass through the muggle repelling wards. Harry thought of how accommodating Professor Dumbledore had been. He wondered if it had to do with the Dursleys or if it had to do with the fact that his bondmates' father was the Deputy Minister of Magic for France. "Maybe it would be a good time to talk to him about the summer." Harry thought.

It was nearly time for the Grangers to arrive and Harry had taken up pacing. Back and forth, back and forth he strolled across the common room. The ladies could feel his anxiety and he could feel their frustration at his pacing.

"Love, they really aren't going to kill you." Hermione said.

"But they're your parents Hermione." Harry replied. "I just want them to like me."

Hermione strolled over to him and put her arms around his waist. "They will love you Harry. They already know a lot about you from my letters to them." Then her lips found his and he found himself lost once again in her lips, her smell and her love pouring through the bond. In their kiss they didn't hear the door open or the Hogwart's Headmaster enter with two guests.

A mental shout from Fleur brought them to their senses and they looked around to see Hermione's parents looking like they were in total shock.

"Well now that you are safely here," The Headmaster said with a twinkle in his eye. "I shall leave you. Call me when you're ready to depart."

Chapter 10

Every parent of a teenage girl is always concerned about hearing four words from their daughter. Those words are 'We need to talk'. This isn't "the Talk" that the parents give the teenage girl concerning boys and hormones and sex. No, this is the possibility of said wonderful innocent child showing up with some scumbag boy and the first words she says is "Mum, Dad we need to talk" and the final words are "I'm pregnant." That is the fear of every parent who has a teenage daughter. Now throw in the fact that the teenage girl goes to a coed boarding school ten months of the year, and the level goes from concerned to being worried about hearing 'We need to Talk'. Mix in the fact the school said teenage daughter attended was in a location the parents could not visit nor call and was in a world of its own and the parental concern rises to terrified of hearing those words. The parents of Hermione Granger were no exceptions. Though they trusted their daughter who showed a level of maturity far beyond a normal child of her age, Mr. and Mrs. Granger were dentist and as such had a pretty good medical background and thoroughly understood the effects of hormones on a teenage girl. They had seen plenty of teenage mothers and pregnant teens come through their dental practice and each and every one of them reminded them of their own daughter and what could happen.

On a cold March morning a snowy white owl pecked at their window with a message from their daughter.

Mum, Dad,

Can you please plan to come to my school on Friday evening for dinner? My * friend Harry and I have something we have to discuss with you that is too important to write in a letter. The Headmaster, Professor Dumbledore will personally meet you at home to escort you at 6pm Friday. Please use Hedwig (the owl delivering this message) to confirm if you can make it.

Love

Hermione

The fact there was an ink blob right after the 'My' in the letter seemed to indicate to the Grangers that Hermione had paused to consider what she should call Harry in her letter. And that brought

them to the only conclusion they could arrive at, this was it, Hermione needed to talk. Could their daughter and this friend be going to tell them she was pregnant? Why else would the Headmaster himself be involved? With a sense of dread they had composed their acceptance and the beautiful owl had flown away with their reply.

For the next day and a half the Grangers worried and fretted, trying to figure out any other news that Hermione and a friend might need to see them in person to deliver. Nothing else came to mind. As the hours passed Richard Granger kept thinking of more and more painful ways to kill the bastard that had touched his daughter if their suspicions were proven true.

Mr. and Mrs. Granger canceled all of their appointments on Friday. They just couldn't bring themselves to go into the office, instead they stayed home and paced and fretted waiting for the appropriate hour to arrive. At precisely six pm their doorbell rang.

"Good evening, I am Professor Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts. I believe your daughter wrote to expect me. May I come in?"

Richard Granger who had answered the door looked at the strangely dressed elderly gentleman. "Uh..yes please do." he finally stammered.

Jean Granger who had been sitting in a chair, chewing on her bottom lip, a habit her daughter had picked up from her, jumped to her feet, and immediately started bombarding the Wizard with questions, "How is Hermione? Is she ok? What does she need to talk to us about?"

Dumbledore raised his hand and said "Hermione is just fine, but I am not the one to tell you what they need to discuss with you. That is something she and Harry Potter must do."

A look passed between the two Grangers, their suspicions turned to fears. Once again Richard's thoughts turned back to the different ways he could inflict pain upon the boy who would do such a thing to his only daughter.

Professor Dumbledore reached into his robes and produced an empty soda can, "It is time for us to be on our way. If I could get each of you to put your finger on this?"

Richard and Jean looked at the Headmaster in confusion. "Why does he want us to touch an empty can?" They both thought as they wondered about the sanity of this strange Wizard in front of them.

At the look of confusion on the Grangers' faces, Professor Dumbledore said "I'm sorry, I should explain, this is a portkey. I have enchanted this item to take us directly to my office at the school. All you have to do is touch it and it will whisk us away as you might say. I will warn you, it can make you dizzy, but it will be over quickly."

Richard and Jean each put a finger on the can and as they saw it glow blue, they found themselves speeding through wind and color until a few seconds later their feet hit a hard surface and they tumbled to the floor.

"What was that?" Richard asked as he scrambled to his feet and then helped his wife up.

"As I said, it is what we call a portkey. It's a magical transportation device." Professor Dumbledore said, then sweeping his arm out "Welcome to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. You are currently standing in my office. If you will follow me, I'll lead you to your daughter and her friend."

He strolled out of his office and led the Grangers through the hallways of the infamous castle that their daughter had told them so much about, finally arriving at the Hospital wing.

"Hospital? You said she was fine. What is she doing in the hospital?" Jean Granger said.

"They aren't actually in the hospital, just in private quarters adjacent to here."

"They are sharing a room?" Richard's voice rising a few decibels as he spoke.

"No, only a common room, they each have private bedrooms. I'm sorry but this is something your daughter really needs to discuss

with you." Dumbledore replied causing both of the elder Grangers to give up their final hope that it wasn't what they feared it to be.

The Headmaster led the Grangers through the hospital wing into a small hallway and stopped in front of a door. He opened the door and led them into the room.

Richard and Jean entered behind the headmaster and looked around the room for their daughter. It took a few seconds to register that the young lady wrapped in the arms of the black haired young man while engaged in a rather stimulating kiss was in fact their daughter. Though they thought themselves mentally prepared for this encounter, seeing their daughter so engrossed in this young man brought back all the memories of her growing up and their mouths opened as they stared in shock. It was another few seconds before Hermione and her friend ended the kiss with a jerk and both of them spun to look at the door while simultaneously moving away from each other.

"Well now that you are safely here," The Headmaster said with a twinkle in his eye. "I shall leave you. Call me when you're ready to depart." And he walked out the door.

"Mum, Dad" Hermione started. "You know my friend I have written to you about in my letters? This is of course Harry Potter. You met him before our second year when we were in Diagon Alley."

Fleur and Gabrielle were watching the exchange. What they found interesting was that Mrs. Granger was looking at her daughter with concern in her eyes, while Mr. Granger was glaring at Harry with pure loathing in his.

Harry was used to the look Mr. Granger had transfixed upon him. It was very similar to the look his Uncle Vernon used quite frequently. It seemed to Harry as if Mr. Granger was doing everything in his power to keep from attacking him.

"Hermione, why is your father so angry at me?" Harry thought. "Is it because I was kissing you? Or do you think Professor Dumbledore mentioned our bond to them?"

"I don't know Harry." She replied.

"Well I promised I would tell them, but remember it's your fault if they kill me." Harry thought.

"Nonsense love, we'll do this together. I love you Harry." Hermione replied.

"I love you too. Just remember that at my funeral."

"I zink Gabrielle and I shall retire for a while." Fleur thought and she nudged her sister and they both walked out of the common room into their own rooms.

"Sir," Harry extended his hand to Mr. Granger who just kept glaring at him refusing to accept the offered hand.

"Mum, Dad. Why are you angry at Harry? We were just kissing." Hermione asked, her voice quavering at how her parents were treating the man she loved. She could feel his hurt, especially as the treatment reminded him of the Dursleys. She walked over and stood defiantly beside Harry. "Or did Professor Dumbledore say anything? He promised he wouldn't."

"Your Headmaster wouldn't tell us anything, but dear are you ok?" Her mother said with obvious concern in her voice.

"I was fine until you showed up Mother. I haven't seen you in seven months and instead of being glad to see me, Dad comes in and starts acting like my... my boyfriend was doing something wrong by kissing me." Hermione said finally putting a term to her relationship with Harry. "I'm sorry if that bothers you but I am fifteen. It isn't like we were...." The pieces fell into place in her mind, it made sense, her mother's note of concern, her father's anger at Harry. "That's why isn't it? You think we asked you here to tell you..."

Harry glanced at Hermione, and picked the words up in her mind and his face turned a bright red.

"You thought we were going to tell you I was pregnant?" Her parents' change of facial expression told her instantly she had hit on the truth. "How could you think that? You know I would never....we have never...even if we did...it...it" Hermione's voice trailed off.

Harry felt the turmoil in Hermione and he put his arm around her and pulled her closer to him. Then to her parents, "Sir, Ma'am, maybe we could start this again." He once again held out his hand to Hermione's father. "I'm Harry Potter and we..I mean Hermione is definitely not pregnant." This time a much relieved Richard took his hand and shook it. Jean came over and hugged her daughter.

"I'm sorry." Mrs. Granger said looking chagrined "We shouldn't have thought that, but...no we shouldn't have. I'm sorry dear, and to you too Harry." Hermione nodded at her. "Now what did you bring us up here to tell us?"

"Maybe you better have a seat before we tell you." Harry suggested swallowing hard. "Think the bond is better or worse than being pregnant?"

"Definitely better." Hermione answered. "Well until we mention Fleur and Gabrielle."

Richard and Jean took a seat on one of the love seats while Harry and Hermione sat on one across from them. Harry looked at Hermione's parents who were definitely looking relieved, he swallowed and then started. "Uh..Can we get you something to drink? Water? Juice? Something stronger?"

"Thank you, but not right now." Jean said. "Now why are we here?"

"Uh..yeah about that. I guess we should start by saying Hermione and I are in love." Harry said as he took Hermione's hand in his.

Though Mr. Granger was not extremely happy about that proclamation, it was much better than the other statement, "I presume you didn't go to all this trouble just to tell us you have a boyfriend princess?" Richard asked his daughter.

"No Dad, it's deeper than that." Hermione answered as she blushed at his nickname for her.

"Er...there is no easy way to say what we need to say, so I'm just going to get it over with." Harry said. "Hermione and I, well our love is bonded, with uh..a magical connection between the two of us."

"Magical love?" Jean asked. "What does that mean?"

"It means our hearts and minds are connected Mom." Hermione answered. "Permanently connected."

The Grangers took a few seconds to digest this before Jean asked the obvious question, "As in you are married? Is that what you wanted to tell us?"

"No, we aren't married, nor are we sleeping together." Hermione said quickly. "But this is permanent, and someday," Hermione turned to look at Harry, "we will be." Then realizing the possible misinterpretation, she quickly added "Married I mean."

"But you are so young, what if this is just a crush?" Richard asked.

"Maybe a demonstration of how we know its love?" Harry suggested. "To let them see our connection."

"Definitely."

"Sir, to better answer that question we would like for you to understand something about our bond. Mrs. Granger, could you stay here with Hermione? Mr. Granger could you come with me please?" Harry asked his bond mate's parents. "We want to demonstrate something. Because we think just saying it won't get the point across."

Harry and Mr. Granger went into his bedroom. "Love, why don't you ask you mother to tell you three things in the room?" then turning to Mr. Granger, "Sir, ask me anything only your daughter would know."

Mr. Granger looked at Harry curiously then decided to play the game. "What color is her room?"

"Love, what color is your bedroom?"

Hermione projected an image of her room to Harry, "but remind him he never painted behind the larger bookcase because it was too heavy to move, it's still pink there."

"Sir the color is currently a light blue, but Hermione says to remind you that it's still pink behind the larger bookcase." Harry said with a smile. "Try something much more obscure."

Mr. Granger was shocked, but he tried something else. He pulled out his wallet and showed Harry a picture of Hermione, "Where was this taken?"

Harry sent the image to Hermione, "Well love, looks like that was after our first year. Where was it taken?"

"That was good one, that's the front of my grandmother's house, his mother."

"It's your mother's house sir. Hermione's grandmother." Harry responded to Mr. Granger and smiled again as his jaw dropped.

"What does that mean?" Richard said.

"We'll discuss it further out there, but first I have to pass your wife's test." Harry replied and heard, "Mother pointed to three things in the room Harry. Guess she thought you might be listening somehow. Her earrings, a book that she then sat on," Harry almost heard Hermione's snort, "and the chair closest to the fireplace."

"Ok, love."

"Shall we join them back in the common room sir?" Harry asked Mr. Granger.

Once they were back in there, Mrs. Granger looked at Harry, with a smile, he said, "Mrs. Granger your earrings are quite lovely, and I am sure that is a wonderful book you are sitting on. And the chair near the fireplace is a wonderful place to read." Harry grinned when she pulled the book from under her and looked at her husband.

"Yeah he got me too." Richard admitted.

"What we were doing was showing you that we are connected mentally." Harry explained. "We can hear each other in our minds if we want to, but to answer your earlier question how do we know it's not a crush, we can feel the each others love. In our connection the love takes on an almost physical quality. I know Hermione loves me and she knows I love her. The bond is actually built on that love."

"But how?" Jean said. "Is this something all magical people can do?"

"Good question mom, no it isn't. But before we get into the how, we just want you to understand what it means." Hermione said. "Understand that this isn't something that will go away. This is a forever type of love."

"So you are saying that you are our daughter's boyfriend and future husband?" Richard asked Harry. "you'll live in a magical castle and live happily ever after?"

"Well I doubt we'll live in a castle once we are married, and no one can guarantee happily ever after, but yes we are together and will always be together." Harry replied.

"And you really love him princess?" Richard asked his daughter.

"Yes Dad, I really do." Hermione replied.

"Well considering what we had expected to hear when we arrived," Mr. Granger said, "I guess this is far better, though five or ten years in the future would have been better."

"Dad, that's the easy part." Hermione said. "There is another part to this that is a little more.." She looked at Harry who shrugged his shoulders, "complicated."

Richard looked at Jean then turning back to their daughter, "More complicated?" Then to Harry, "About that drink you offered earlier. Can I still take you up on the offer?"

"Yes sir. That might be a great idea." Harry said, "Dobby."

The house-elf popped up next to Harry causing Mr. and Mrs. Granger to jump out of their seat. "How can I help Harry Potter sir? Are you ready for your Dinner now Sirs, Ma'ams?"

"Not quite yet Dobby." Then turning to the Grangers, "I'm sorry I should have warned you about that. Mr. and Mrs. Granger, please meet Dobby, he is a House Elf who works here at Hogwarts. Dobby, this is Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Hermione's parents."

"It's an honor to meet the parents of one of Harry Potter's bondmates." Dobby said.

"Dobby could you get the Granger's something to drink. I would like a butter beer please." Harry said and then looking at Hermione, "make that two", and then turning back to Grangers, "They have just about anything you can ask for."

"Do you have Brandy?" Richard asked the diminutive elf.

"Certainly sir, one Brandy coming right up." Dobby replied

"What about a glass of white wine?" Jean asked.

Dobby popped away and within twenty seconds was back with a bottle of Brandy and a glass for Richard and a bottle of white wine and a glass for Jean. He also had the two butterbeers for Harry and Hermione.

"Thanks Dobby," Harry said. "We'll call when we would like dinner."

"Yes sir, Harry Potter sir." And Dobby disappeared.

"Service is excellent it seems" Richard said as he poured himself a drink and then poured Jeans. "And you said that is a house-elf."

"Yes but," Harry looked at Hermione and smiled, "But they are a touchy subject with your daughter."

Mrs. Granger took a sip of her wine and thought for a moment, "Harry, Dobby said the parents of one of your bondmates, what exactly did he mean by that?"

Harry winced, "I see where Hermione gets her skill of observation from. That brings us to the more complicated part of this story." He gave a quick look to his girlfriend "Hermione, want this part?"

"No, it seems you're doing a wonderful job." Hermione smirked at him but still had a look of concern as she looked back at her parents.

"Thanks love." Harry replied and then back to the Grangers. "Have either of you ever heard of what you would consider the mythical entities called Veela?" When both of the Grangers shook their heads, he continued, "They are of course real, and they have certain

magical powers, one of which is to create the bond that Hermione and I share."

"Fleur, Gabrielle, could you join us?"

"Of course love." Fleur responded.

The two Delacours walked into the common room. "Mr. and Mrs. Granger, I would like to introduce Fleur and Gabrielle Delacour, my...uh other bond mates," Harry said quietly "and Hermione's bond sisters."

Richard Granger's mouth open and closed several times before anything actually came out. "Three? Three women bonded to you? You have some kind of Harem and you dragged my daughter into this?" His voice rose in anger as his face turned red.

"Dad," Hermione exclaimed, "Calm down and listen. Harry didn't drag me into anything. It was my choice and it's not a Harem."

"Thanks love." Harry thought.

"What do you call having three women at his beck and call then?" Richard said glaring at Harry.

Gabrielle and Fleur both snorted at that comment.

"Sir," Harry started and then breathed deeply to calm himself. "Sir, a Harem suggests some type of Dominance or control. I guarantee that these women are my equal in this relationship if not my better. Yes it is unusual, but it exists." Harry took another deep breath. "It isn't something we had planned on, but it happened and I do not regret it happening. Each of these ladies is very special to me."

Jean looked at the young man in front of her. Her daughter's bond mate? "Harry, may I ask how did this happen?"

Harry looked at the three ladies he was bonded too, feeling their love. He smiled at Hermione's mother and started his explanation. "Ma'am, Fleur and Gabrielle are both part Veela. They initiated the bond with me after I helped them with some difficulties."

"Difficulties? 'e saved our lives." Fleur said. "Without 'Arry we both would be dead. But zat was only the final zing, we both love 'Arry very much."

"Mr. and Mrs. Granger." Gabrielle said quietly, "It wasn't 'Arry's idea for 'Ermione to join ze bond. Ze bond was originally between 'Arry and us. 'Ermione was just zere to 'elp us. But my sister and I found out zey loved each other and we wanted 'Arry to be 'appy, so we invited 'er to join."

"If he loved my daughter so much why was he bonding to you two?" Mr. Granger asked.

"That's not important.." Harry started.

"Non, 'Arry. Zey need to understand." Fleur said and then to Mr. Granger, " 'Arry was sacrificing his future to save our lives sir. If ze 'adn't bonded with us we wouldn't 'ave survived."

"I do not regret bonding with you. You are my family." Harry said and felt the warmth of her happiness spread over the bond with her.

"And you are ours 'Arry."

"I love your daughter sir, and will be forever glad she agreed to bond with me." Harry said. "As I said, all of these ladies are very special, they are my family."

Hermione looked nervously at her parents, she wanted so desperately for them to accept Harry and her bond sisters.

Mr. and Mrs. Granger looked at each other then at their daughter, then back at Harry. Then Richard asked "Not saying I would but what would prevent us from removing our daughter from this school?"

Hermione eyes watered, and Harry felt her pain through the bond. "I don't think he would love, he's playing what if."

Harry's eyes narrowed and Richard saw the intensity in them increase, "Absolutely nothing sir." He said coldly. "Except it would make your daughter, myself and the Delacours miserable for the next year and a half, if that long. When your daughter turned

seventeen she would probably rejoin us." Harry sighed as he looked at Hermione's father. "Sir I can feel the pain that question caused your daughter. Do you really want to force her to choose between us? All she wants is for you to accept the decision she made. She wants you to be happy that she is happy. Is that too much to ask from loving parents?"

"But she is only fifteen years old." Jean said. "I feel like I'm losing my little girl."

Harry's eyes softened as he looked at Mrs. Granger. "Ma'am, you're only losing the little girl she was only to have her replaced by a beautiful young caring woman she is. I can see both of you love your daughter, and I know she loves you. I'm not asking you to give her up, only to share her with me and her new sisters. I know this relationship is unusual, but it is real. You can fight against it and make Hermione miserable or you can accept it and share in her happiness."

"We really don't have a choice do we?" Richard Granger said.

"Recently a wise man told me there are always choices, but sometimes the choices are not always equal." Harry said. "I hope you choose your daughter's happiness."

"Richard, we accepted that Hermione was going to live a different life than us when we found out she was a witch." Jean said to her husband as she took his hand. "I know that I'm not totally comfortable with this, but Hermione is happy with it, and Harry seems like a nice young man who loves her. Obviously we don't understand this bond of theirs, but it obviously does exist." She looked at her daughter. "Hermione, I support your decision, but I will always be here for you if you need me."

"I love you princess." Mr. Granger said softly to his daughter. "I just want to protect you. You use to come to me when you needed a hug against a cruel world. It just hurts to be replaced. Good luck in this, you know I'll always love you."

Hermione dashed over to her parents and wrapped them both in a hug. Harry could feel her relief pouring through the bond. He looked over at Fleur and Gabrielle and noticed both were smiling and both had tears in their eyes.

"I love you Hermione" Harry said "and I am so happy for you."

"What about that dinner now?" Harry asked the Grangers. "You can get an idea of the food your daughter gets to eat while she is away from you."

"That sounds wonderful." Mrs. Granger said from the middle of the Granger family hug that was still in progress.

They spent the next couple of hours enjoying a pleasant meal. The Grangers were shocked when the food and plates kept magically appearing and disappearing from in front of them. Hermione was beaming with happiness that her parents were accepting her and Harry and their unusual relationship. She knew it hadn't been easy for them and it would be time before they became comfortable with it, but they had accepted it. Eventually though the topic did come back to the relationship.

"Harry, you and Hermione mentioned you would be married someday." Jean said, "How will that work with Fleur and Gabrielle?"

"Uh..I don't know exactly." Harry said swallowing hard, swearing the small bite of pudding he just had turned into a lump of coal on the way to his stomach. "I was told that exceptions would be made for such relationships in the magical society. But I don't know exactly how it will be reflected in the Non-Magical world."

"Magic 'Arry." Fleur smiled at her future husband. "At least in France ze wedding bands will 'ave a charm place on zem zat will make non-magical people believe it is perfectly normal for us to all be married. As will ze Marriage licenses."

"I love magic." Harry thought.

"Have you given any thought to what you are going to do when you graduate Harry?" Mr. Granger asked. "With having three wives to support?"

"Er..Uh..Not really." Harry said.

"Dad, that wasn't fair." Hermione said. "First of all career counseling happens during out fifth year before our OWLs and second do you

think I am the type of person who will be a housewife and expect my husband to support me? Nor do I think Fleur or Gabrielle will be either."

"I'm sorry princess." Richard said. "I didn't mean to upset you. It's a question fathers are supposed to ask of suitors of their daughter."

"Hmmp."

" 'Ermione is right zough." Fleur said. "I will be getting a job next year. I would never expect 'Arry to support me. We will take care of each other."

Richard's fork clambered down on his plate. "Get a job? Next year? What about school?"

"I graduate Beauxbaton zis year sir." Fleur replied as she winced at Harry. "I'm sorry love. I know our age is still uncomfortable to you and zat is going to be 'is next question."

"Not as much anymore. I know you love me." Harry smiled at Fleur.

"Miss Delacour, uh, how old are you?" Richard asked proving Fleur right.

Jean smacked her husband on the arm. "Really dear, asking a lady her age?"

"It is alright. I am seventeen, and will turn eighteen in August." Fleur replied.

"And you are?" Richard asked Harry.

"Fourteen sir."

"I see." Was all Richard could say. Not that he could see a damn thing. Here was a young man who had three young ladies including his own daughter and two young women who any young man in the country would kill to get a date with proclaiming their undying love to him. One of the young ladies was three years older than him. Richard didn't know whether to be envious or feel sorry for the young man. He just shook his head numbly.

Harry looked over at Gabrielle who had been very quite during the evening. He could feel she wasn't feeling very well. He sent a mental smile at her causing her to look at him. "You're beautiful. I hope we haven't left you out too much. Are you feeling ok?"

"I'm fine. Just some discomfort." Gabrielle replied.

When the meal finally ended and the Grangers were ready to leave, Hermione came up with an idea. "Mom, Dad. Would you like to see if you can stay the night and let us show you around the castle tomorrow? You can meet all of my professors."

"Good luck introducing them to Snape." Harry thought.

"And you can meet our parents." Fleur said. "Zey would love to talk to you."

Jean looked at Richard who nodded. "Would your Headmaster allow it? Isn't he waiting to take us back home?"

"One way to find out Ma'am." Harry replied. "Dobby."

Again the Grangers flinched as the little house-elf appeared. Harry laughed a little. "You do eventually get used to it." Then turning to Dobby he said. "Could you ask the Headmaster if the Grangers can spend the night and have a tour of Hogwarts tomorrow?"

It was only a couple of minutes before he was back. "Headmaster says it is fine with him for the Grangers to stay. But to remind you that this weekend is a Hogsmeade visit and the Grangers should not leave the castle grounds until they are ready to go home. He also said to remind Harry Potter and Hermione Granger that you need to catch up on your classes before Monday."

Hermione's hand shot to her mouth.

"Did you actually forget about homework?" Harry asked.

"I've had other things on my mind. We'll get our assignments when we introduce my parents." Hermione replied. "Then we can spend the rest of the weekend catching up."

Harry did a mental groan. "So no Hogsmeade for us?"

"We'll see love. Depends on how much effort you put into your studies."

"Why can't we leave the castle grounds princess?" Mr. Granger asked his daughter.

"The castle is surrounded by Muggle or non-magical repelling wards Dad." Hermione explained. "If you were to leave the grounds, you wouldn't be able to return to the castle without Professor Dumbledore's help. In fact you wouldn't even be able to see the castle. That is why he personally had to bring you yesterday."

Richard just shook his head again as he tried to figure out exactly how you can hide a castle. "I'll never understand magic" He thought.

A different house-elf appeared to make up an unused bedroom for the Grangers. Once they were shown the bedroom they got to see their daughter do magic for the first time where she transfigured their clothes into pajamas for them. They all set off to their own bedrooms for a goodnight sleep after a stressful evening.

A couple of hours later Harry awoke with a start. He could feel something wrong. Something was wrong with Gabrielle. He reached out to her, and found her crying and there was blood and she hurt. He grabbed his wand and rushed out of his room yelling "GABRIELLE!" only to hear sharp mental yell from Fleur that stopped him.

" 'ARRY, I'm with Gabrielle. Everything is fine."

By then everyone was pouring out of their bedrooms into the common room to find out what the commotion was about.

"But what's wrong with her." Harry asked urgently.

"Nozing serious 'arry, just 'er first period. It can be upsetting."

"Her what?" The confusion evidently in his question.

Hermione put her arms around Harry, "It's her time of the month Harry."

Harry still looked at her in confusion.

"Oh Merlin Harry, you don't know about the female menstrual cycle?" Hermione questioned.

"Obviously not." Harry shot back in annoyance.

"But you lived with your Aunt, didn't...no I guess not. I'm sorry Harry. I shouldn't have been short." Hermione said.

Jean Granger having heard the conversation walked over to the two, "Do you want me to do this dear? Otherwise he might not want to look at you for a while, and something tells me this isn't something you want to communicate in your mind connection."

Hermione looked at Harry, "Mother will explain it Harry. I think she will do a better job."

Jean Granger took Harry aside and gently explained to the blushing young man what exactly happened every month in the human female body. After she left him sitting there, Mr. Granger came over and sat beside him, and gave him the best advice he had garnered over twenty years of marriage on how to deal with these cycles. Nothing endeared the innocent young man into the hearts of Jean and Richard Granger more than that evening.

After everyone returned to their bed, Richard turned to his wife and said. "You know, earlier I wasn't sure if I should envy Harry or feel sorry for him. I now know I should feel sorry for him."

"Why dear? He has three lovely ladies all in love with him."

"Yes, but he also is mentally connected to three women who all will suffer through menstrual cycles each month. God help him."

That comment earned him a swat from his wife.

Albus Dumbledore sat in his office contemplating Harry Potter and the three females that had bonded to him. He knew there was nothing he could have done to prevent it from happening once the bonding had initiated. But he was deeply concerned about how this turn of events played into the prophecy. He would have to think on that awhile. Now in the meantime, he needed to make sure he still

had Harry's trust and an old proverb played upon his mind. "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." After what he had viewed in the bonding, Harry definitely considered the Dursley's his enemy. It's time to bring in a friend to help Harry get revenge in a way that would not damage his soul.

Ok, think we can start moving forward more rapidly now. Next

Chapter 11

When Harry awoke the next morning he found himself staring at silvery blond hair through his blurry vision. His arm was draped over a petite figure and he had no clue what was going on. He pulled back startled and found his glasses.

"Good morning 'Arry." The owner of the hair said quietly as she rolled over and looked at him.

"Fleur? What are you doing in my bed?" Harry whispered.

"Sleeping of course, love." Fleur said.

"But..but why?"

Fleur smiled at her bond mate. "I wanted too. I enjoy being close to you." Fleur ran her fingers through his hair. "But also after last night, I didn't want you to wake up to zat being your first zoughts of ze day. 'ermione and I were talking and she was concerned you would try to find a way to blame yourself for what 'appened last night."

"But.." Harry said with exactly those thoughts.

"Love." Fleur said gently looking into Harry's eyes, "Don't. You've never 'ad a female adult who cared about you in your life. We don't expect you to be an expert on women 'arry." She smiled at him, "but with three bond mates, you will be shortly enough. As we will be very familiar with the intricacies of ze inner working of men or at least one very special man."

Harry blushed and then remembering what started last night "Gabriel.."

"She's fine. When she wakes up just remind 'er 'ow much you care." Fleur said. "But it will be sensitive to 'er for a while, so don't ask about it zis morning, but don't try to ignore it either."

"So don't ask, but don't ignore it." Harry repeated.

"Exactly." Fleur smiled. " 'old 'er, give 'er small kisses. Don't tease her.."

"I wouldn't.."

"I know 'arry. Zat's why you are special." Fleur said smiling. "Until she does wake up, lay back down and 'old me some more. It will give you something to remind you of other aspects of women zat are much more enjoyable." Then mentally "Not to mention very enjoyable for myself as well. I could definitely get use to waking up in your arms 'Arry." Harry could feel her love and contentment as he laid back down and draped his arm over her.

When Hermione left her bedroom she found her parents already awake and sitting out in the common room looking lost to as what to do.

"Good morning Mum, Dad."

"Good morning Princess." Her father said turning to her. "We..uh..didn't know what to do this morning."

"You could call Dobby if you wanted something to drink." Hermione said.

"He..he would come if we called?" Jean asked.

"Give it a try." Hermione said with a slight twinkle in her eye. "Just please be nice to him."

"Uh..Dobby?" Jean asked to the air.

The small house-elf popped into existence right next to Hermione's mother. "How can Dobby help Harry Potter's bond mate's mother?"

"Uh..could I get a cup of tea please Dobby?" Jean Granger asked.

"Could I get coffee?" Richard Granger asked.

"Right away." Dobby was gone in an instant.

"Is everything about Harry?" Richard sighed to his daughter.

Hermione smiled, "When it comes to Dobby, yes. Harry tricked his old abusive master into setting him free. The little elf worships the group Harry walks on, but Harry always treats him as a friend."

Dobby popped back in with a large tray with tea and coffee pots, cups, sugar, honey, and cream. "Will you be eating breakfast here this morning?" He asked.

"I'm not sure Dobby." Hermione said. "We'll let you know. Thank you."

"Harry Potter's Hermione is welcome." And Dobby was gone.

Jean Granger poured herself a cup of tea and sitting back in her chair she looked at her daughter. "Are you ok this morning Hermione?"

Hermione had gotten a far away distracted look on her face. "Harry, mum and dad are awake and out in the common room. So you might not want to walk out here with Fleur at the moment." Hermione mentally suggested to Harry.

"I presume you are speaking to Harry?" Mrs. Granger guessed correctly.

"Yes mum."

"Is he coming out soon?" Richard Granger asked. "After last night, I wonder if I should discuss other matters with him."

"Dad, if you are planning on giving him the other talk, you need to know the magical world has umm... charms and potions instead of pills and protection for such matters." Hermione said then quickly adding when her mother raised an eyebrow, "I read mother, plus I have three other dorm mates who talk nonstop about boys."

"I wasn't accusing you.." Her mother started.

"I know mum," Hermione sighed, "but after last night, I'm still a little defensive about my relationship with Harry. Why don't we go into the bedroom and I'll transfigure your clothes back. I can even change the colors if you want."

Once they had entered the Granger's bedroom and closed the door, Hermione suggested to Fleur that now would be a good time to get to her room and to Harry, "Love, my father is planning on giving you

the talk this morning. I'm sorry, but you'll get serious boyfriend of his daughter points if you just listen."

"It's alright. I'm just glad he is accepting us." Harry replied. "I prefer him talking to me, rather than yelling. I'm going to hop in the shower and will be out in a few minutes."

"Dobby wanted to know if we wanted breakfast here."

"Breakfast here and lunch in the Great Hall?" Harry suggested.

"Sounds good, I'll let Dobby know." Hermione said. "Right now I have to get my parents dressed." Harry could almost hear the smirk in her voice at that statement. Fleur used that time to head for her own room to get ready for the day.

Harry could feel Gabrielle stirring, "Good morning beautiful." Harry could feel a few emotions coming over their bond. Embarrassment was the leading one. Harry pushed his concern for her down the bond. "Breakfast soon. Are you hungry?"

"I'm fine 'arry. Zank you." Gabrielle replied. "I'll be out soon."

When Harry exited his bedroom, Mr. Granger had had his clothes transfigured back and was waiting for him. He took Harry aside and started discussing the other matter with him. His bondmates did their very best in not embarrassing Harry, but he could hear the various giggles and laughs. "There will be revenge you know." He sent back to them.

A half hour later a still blushing Harry was sitting at the table with everyone at the table enjoying a good breakfast. He started thinking of the things that they need to get done today and realized there was one thing the Grangers needed know before they went out for the day.

"Sir, Mrs. Granger." Harry started. "One thing we need to explain before we show you the castle. We.." Harry smiled at his bond mates, "are going to try to conceal the existence of our bond until the summertime."

"Is there a reason?" Richard asked.

"In the wizarding world Harry is very famous Dad." Hermione said.

"Famous? In what way?"

"Think Prince Charles meets Sean Connery type of famous." Hermione replied.

"Hermione, what do your parents know about me?" Harry queried.

"That you are a wonderful friend who is a great seeker on the Quidditch team." Hermione replied.

"So nothing about our adventures?" Harry asked.

"Would you let your twelve year old daughter go back to a castle where she was attacked by a mountain troll? Or a Basilisk? Or plants that try to kill you, or friends who were attacked by a Dark Wizard? Or who spent a couple months of her life jumping back in time an hour at a time only to help a mass murderer escape?" Hermione replied.

"I wondered why you kept me from talking about them last night." Harry replied. "So they don't know about how I lost my parents?"

"No. I'm sorry Harry. I did tell them you lost your parents when you were one, but again I was afraid to tell them about Voldemort then."

"I love you. So shall I tell them now?"

"Yes. You'll need to explain why you are famous." Hermione replied.

"Sir, Hermione says she told you I lost my parents when I was one year old." Harry started. "They were killed by an evil Wizard named Voldemort. On Halloween when I was a baby, this Dark Wizard found where my parents were hiding and killed them and he tried to kill me. I'm famous because not only did I survive the curse, but it somehow rebounded to him and destroyed his body. For some reason the people see me as the person who defeated Voldemort. They call me the boy-who-lived."

"This Wizard tried to kill you as a one year old baby?" Jean Granger cried out.

"Yes ma'am." Harry replied.

"Why?" She asked.

"Voldemort was very evil mother." Hermione said. "For some reason he targeted the Potters and they went into hiding. Unfortunately one of their friends betrayed them, allowing Voldemort to find them."

"You mentioned that the curse destroyed his body." Richard said. "So it killed him?"

"Uh...no." Harry replied. "Somehow though his body died, his essence exists as something else. But anyway that is why I am famous." Quickly ending the conversation to prevent anything else from coming up.

"Because he is famous, the press goes crazy about any small thing that comes across about him." Hermione said. "We are hoping by waiting until summer, the press can do all of their stories before school starts back up and minimize some of publicity that will happen. We will have reporters outside of home as soon as the story breaks."

"So what does this mean to you and Harry and...and.." Richard said nodding to Fleur and Gabrielle.

"We are going to say that only Gabrielle is my girlfriend." Harry started. "Hermione has been my friend since first year, so no one is going think anything of her being with me, and Fleur is Gabrielle's older sister so she will be my friend and sister's chaperon."

"Complicated relationship?" Richard asked.

"You can say that." Harry responded. "That reminds me. We need to tell the staff about what we are planning on doing so they don't spread it around. Dobby!"

The house elf was there immediately. "Yes sir, Harry Potter sir."

"Hi Dobby, could ask Professor Dumbledore if we could have a meeting today of all the people who know about our bond including Fleur and Gabrielle's parents?" Then Harry turned to his bond mates, "Is there anyone we want to include?"

"Madam Maxine if she doesn't already know." Fleur said.

"Professor McGonagall?" Hermione suggested. "As head of our house she can run interference if necessary."

"I agree." Harry replied then to Dobby, "Ask Professor Dumbledore to include Madam Maxine and Professor McGonagall if they don't already know."

"Yes sir Harry Potter sir." And the elf was gone.

"Now shall we show you the castle?" Hermione asked her parents. "Oh, I just realized, you don't have coats do you?"

"I can do a warming spell on zem when zey get cold 'Ermione." Fleur said. "I'll 'elp you take care of your parents."

Hermione smiled at Fleur. "Thanks."

Harry noticed Gabrielle was staying very quiet. "Are you alright Gabrielle? Ready to go out and be introduced as my girlfriend?"

A smile played over Gabrielle's lips. "Do we get to try out a 'ogwart's broom closet?"

Harry choked on a swallow of tea he was drinking at the time. "How...wha..Hermione suggested that didn't she?" Harry mentally accused, then glancing over at the culprit who guessed what just happened.

"Thinking of broom closets already Harry?" She asked innocently.

Dobby popped back in about that time, "Professor Dumbledore says late afternoon about five in his office would be best. Teachers are needed right now to get students off to Hogsmeade. He also says Professor McGonagall will join you, but she also has given your homework assignments to your Wheezy."

Harry first thought was he really needed to get Dobby to stop calling Ron "his wheezy." But that was for another time. "Thanks Dobby. You have been wonderful helping us. I really appreciate it."

"Dobby always willing to help Harry Potter sir. You just call." And the elf disappeared.

Harry turned to Hermione, "Think Ron went to Hogsmeade?"

"Probably, my guess is he's already in Zonko's or Honeydukes, but we are going to show Mum and Dad Gryffindor Tower so we can make sure he isn't there."

A short time later the six of them were standing in front of the portrait of the fat lady and a password later they were showing the Grangers, Fleur and Gabrielle Harry and Hermione's home. Harry did not follow the others when they ascended up the steps to the girl's dorm, the steps obviously recognized Mr. Granger as someone safe, but Harry wasn't going to push his luck. After Hermione's quick tour up their steps, the trip to the Boy's dorm, and everyone could see where Harry lived. They traipsed over the castle, showing the Grangers the various points of interest. They took them up to the Owlery and all the owls that roosted there; they also found the diminutive Professor Flitwick and Professor Vector in their offices and got to hear glowing remarks about their daughter.

After a lunch in the Great Hall mostly filled with first and second year's students due to the Hogsmeade trip, the Grangers were shown the ground of Hogwarts. Including a trip down to Hagrids where fortunately no blasted ended Skrewts were around. They took them for a walk near the black lake, and finally ended up near the Quidditch field. He explained the rules of the most famous sport in the Wizarding world. After a visit to the Greenhouses where the Grangers had to be warned about the more dangerous plants, they realized the time to start toward the Headmaster's office had come.

Harry was walking beside Gabrielle holding her hand, "Are you feeling ok? Want to help me get back at Hermione." He thought to Gabrielle.

"I'll be fine 'Arry. How?" came the reply.

Harry pull Gabrielle back behind everyone else and with a wink pulled her into one of the infamous Hogwart's broom closets. Hermione who was leading the way felt a familiar sensation creep over her mind and stopped dead in her tracks.

Mrs. Granger noticed her daughter get a faraway look in her eyes. "Is there something wrong dear?" She asked.

"Yeah mum, like I'm going to tell you that my boyfriend is kissing my sister and I'm enjoying the kiss?" Hermione thought, "That's not going to happen."

"Harry what are you doing?" She mentally yelled

"Just showing Gabrielle a broom closet. I thought it was your idea." Harry replied innocently, then pulling Gabrielle back out of the closet they turned the corner and met back up with the group.

"I like your broom closets 'Arry." Gabrielle thought. "You can give me that tour anytime."

"Nothing Mum, Harry was just telling me, uh...that it's really close to the time and we need to hurry."

"Fibbing to your parents Hermione?" Harry asked.

"Hmmp." Harry could hear the annoyance in her mental voice.

"I love you Hermione." Harry thought soothingly and could feel the annoyance disappear.

"As long as you plan on taking me on that tour as well."

The Grangers were amazed at the Gargoyle and the revolving staircase that led up to the Headmaster's office. They hadn't paid much attention to it the previous evening going down the staircase. As they approached the headmaster's door, Fleur asked Mrs. Granger for a quick word alone.

"Ma'am," She said politely to Hermione's mother. "Zere are going to be two 'alf Veela's in zis meeting. My muzzer and a Professor from ze Veela Magical Institute."

"And that is important for me to know why?" Mrs. Granger asked with a questioning look.

"Veela 'ave an innate power called allure, Mrs. Granger. " Fleur explained. "Eet is possible for your 'usband to..uh...fall under zose

charms. If 'e starts acting strangely, don't take eet personally, just try distracting 'im, maybe by stepping on 'is foot."

"Strangely?"

"Yes, when 'e was younger, did 'e do silly things to try to impress you?" Fleur asked.

"Oh god yes." Jean responded remembering some of her husband's sillier antics.

"It is possible 'e might start trying to do zings like zat, or at least get a very glassy eyed look and stare at either my muzzer or Rachelle." Fleur explained.

"So Veela have power over men?" Jean asked looking wearily at the young Veela.

Fleur winced. "Yes, if zey wish to." She said "Zough I find ze practice distasteful. But in zis meeting ze 'alf Veela will not be trying to but just the vicinity might cause a reaction from your 'usband. I just wanted to warn you."

"Thank you, I guess." Mrs. Granger said, then realizing what she said. "I'm sorry. I'm still confused about your relationship with Harry and with Hermione. I looked at you and your sister and wonder how my daughter can compete with you?"

"Compete with us Mrs. Granger?" Fleur asked then smiled. "You 'ave it backward. We 'ave to compete with 'er. 'Arry loves your daughter more than you could possibly imagine. Never should zere be a doubt in your mind who will always be first in 'Arry's life. Zough compete is not a good word for us. Your daughter is my bond sister. I want 'er to be 'appy. If she isn't 'appy zen 'arry will not be 'appy and I will feel zat sadness in our bond. Competition suggests jealousy, and zat would go against our relationship. We can't afford to be jealous of each other because it will hurt us just as much as ze other person."

"Oh," was all Jean Granger could say, she hadn't thought of it like that.

The two of them rejoined the group and they knocked on the door.

"Enter." The voice of the Headmaster said. When the group came into the office they looked around and saw Madam Pomfrey, Professor McGonagall, Rachelle Berceau, Madam Maxine, Apolline and Alian Delacour, Padfoot was curled under the window and Professor Dumbledore even had Dobby in the room. He was looking rather uncomfortable as he stood in the corner looking at everyone.

"Good evening Mr. and Mrs. Granger." The Headmaster said. "May I introduce you to everyone else in the room?" He then started the introductions. Mrs. Granger was thankful of Fleur's warning when Richard was introduced to Rachelle. He seemed very reluctant to let go her hand and his eyes went out of focus. She stepped on his foot and brought his attention back to where it needed to be.

"Now Harry, you asked to see all of us." Professor Dumbledore stated.

"Uh, yes sir." Harry started, then to all of his bond mates "I don't see Dark Wizard, Basilisks or Dementors, so shouldn't one of you be doing this?"

"Non, you're doing very well love." Fleur responded with a hint of a smile in her voice.

"I'll do it Harry." Hermione said and then looking at everyone in the room she said out loud "Is this everyone who knows about our bond?"

Professor McGonagall's eyes turned first to the Headmaster and then back to Harry and the three ladies around him. "What bond Miss Granger?"

"I'm sorry Professor, give me a moment and I'll explain. So everyone else knows, and this is everyone?" Hermione asked.

"Mr. Delacour spoke with Hagrid, but only in context of Harry saving his daughters' lives." The headmaster said. "He didn't mention the bond you share. There are the two persons who assisted Professor Berceau in the bonding." He turned and looked at Rachelle.

"They will not speak of it. A bond is considered a private matter and only with permission would it be discussed." She assured everyone.

"The portraits in this room are honor bound not to reveal anything stated in here while house-elves who are bound to the castle," The Headmaster noted the scowl on Hermione's face, "cannot discuss the matter. I did invite Dobby who is a free elf, but I am quite sure he would not disclose your secrets."

All eyes in the room turned to the small elf. "Dobby would never tell anyone Harry Potter's or his bond mates secrets." He said fervently.

"We know that Dobby." Hermione said smiling at the little elf. "We really do appreciate all you have done for us." She turned to Professor McGonagall who was still looking confused. "Professor, we wanted to let you in on this secret and then we will discuss what we want to do about it. You see, Fleur, Gabrielle and I are uh..bonded to Harry via a Veela bonding." She said.

"But how...what...you're not Veela." The Professor sputtered.

"No Ma'am, but when Harry and I had a choice to allow it to happen while completing the bond between him, Fleur and Gabrielle we chose to let it happen." Hermione said.

"So all three of you...to Harry?"

"Yes Ma'am." Fleur said speaking up.

Professor McGonagall stared at Fleur and then over at Harry, she just shook her head and muttered something that sounded like "Only Harry Potter."

"I will admit I did not know you were part of the bond..Miss?" Madam Maxine asked.

"Granger, Hermione Granger."

"Zank you." The Beauxbaton Headmistress said. "I knew about Fleur and Gabrielle. Zeir parents let me know since zey are my students, but..." she trailed off as she looked at Dumbledore.

"It wasn't for me to disclose Olympe." Professor Dumbledore said. "It was a choice by the bonded."

"Thank you Professor." Hermione said. "Now to why we wanted to speak to you today is to deal with that exact issue, information control. We thought because of all of the issues surround Harry this year, including the Tri-Wizard Tournament and the articles by Rita Skeeter, it would be better to not disclose our bond until the summer. We plan on meeting at the Delacours then and at that time we will announce the bond has formed. We will not disclose when or the circumstance surrounding it. It will give plenty of time for the Daily Prophet and other newspapers to cover it before school starts back. For now, our plan is very simple, Harry is dating Gabrielle, I'm still his best friend and Fleur is our friend and her sister's chaperon."

"Can't 'ave her out with just some old English Wizard even if 'e did save our lives." Fleur said smiling at Harry.

"And Mr. Weasley?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"We..uh...we are going to see how that plays out. We aren't going to tell him yet." Hermione said.

"And Gabrielle? She will attend Hogwarts?" The Headmaster asked.

"Yes sir." Harry said looking around and smiled at his youngest bond mate. "Still feeling ok?"

"Yes, zank you 'arry."

Harry turned back to his Headmaster. "But though she will not enroll until next year, we wondered if she can start classes here this year. Maybe with the excuse of it would be difficult to continue her education as the only third year with the Beauxbatons."

"We can arrange that." Professor Dumbledore said after a questioning glance at the Beaubaton's Headmistress who nodded.

"Do you think she can go ahead and sleep in the dorms?" Harry asked.

"That might raise too many questions." Dumbledore said. "But we can go ahead and see what the sorting hat says if you would like. Or we can wait until next year and just have her sit with what class works best for her now."

"I zink I would like to try to make friends zis year and be in zeir classes again next year." Gabrielle spoke up. "So I prefer to go ahead and see where I would be sorted."

"Very well." The Headmaster walked over to the shelf where a patched and frayed hat sat upon a shelf.

"I've been listening Headmaster." The hat spoke. "Put me upon the young lady's head and let's see where she shall go."

Gabrielle looked apprehensively at the hat, and then put it on. "Do you know of the four houses dear girl?" The hat asked.

"Non, I know 'Arry is in Gryffindor and Fleur spoke of 'Ufflepuff."

"Each house values a different trait. Knowledge, Loyalty, Bravery and Cunning. I'm not going to tell you which is which. Your bondmate wouldn't let me put him where I thought he belonged just because he heard bad things of the house. Now of those traits which do you think fits you the best. I'll see if I agree with you." The hat said.

Gabrielle considered, "I don't think it would be cunning, and I'm not very brave..."

"Don't sell yourself short young miss. You have plenty of bravery, but it might not be your strongest attribute."

"So Knowledge or Loyalty, but it would be loyalty to the 'ouse. Presuming 'arry and 'ermione are not in zat house, I would 'ave more loyalty to zem zan to my 'ouse, so I would say zhe 'ouse zat values Knowledge would be my best choice." Gabrielle said.

"Just the reasoning you just used, suggests you are correct. I will let you know that your Bond Mates are in the house of Bravery. Does that knowledge change your mind?"

" 'Ermione isn't in ze 'ouse zat values knowledge?" Gabrielle asked.

"I tried to put her there, but you will notice a pattern amongst your bonded. They both requested the house of Bravery." The old hat said.

"Am I brave enough?" Gabrielle asked.

"It's not if you are brave enough now, but it's your potential for bravery I look for. You most definitely have that."

"Zen if you will allow me to select, put me with my bond mate."

"As you wish Miss Delacour. As you wish. GRYFFINDOR!" the hat spoke out at last.

Harry and Hermione smiled at Gabrielle as she removed the hat. Before she handed it back to the Hogwart's Headmaster, she said "Zank you." to it.

The headmaster took the hat and put it back on the shelf, and said "So Miss Delacour will take classes with the Gryffindor third years. Minerva if you would make sure to get with her to find out what electives she is currently taking at Beauxbaton and turn that into a schedule for her.

"Yes Albus."

Hermione turned back to everyone in the room. "I guess that only leaves one last thing to deal with. What is the reason for us to be out of commission for the last few days?"

Dumbledore turned to Madam Pomfrey. "Poppy?"

"Well Harry can easily still claim magical exhaustion. Gabrielle went through Veela transformation and we can claim we were monitoring her since it was done earlier than it should have been." The nurse turned to Madam Maxine, "did you tell you students anything about Fleur?"

"I only said she was in your care because of the tragedy under the lake." The Beauxbaton Headmistress said.

"Excellent. We can always say after she was treated she stayed to take care of her sister. Hermione's reason is going to be the trickiest. She became isolated after everyone else."

"Maybe I can suggest something." McGonagall said. "The last I saw of her along with a lot of other students before this meeting was her

leaving the Great Hall via phoenix and then today she is with her parents. May I suggest we tell people she had to go home due to a family emergency?"

"That sounds perfect since you are my family now." Harry thought to Hermione and saw the bushy haired witch smile as her almond brown eyes looked into his emerald ones.

"You know that calls for me snogging you later don't you?"

"I sure hope so."

"Does anybody else have any questions?" Hermione asked. "We really do appreciate your time this evening."

"Headmaster, may we talk to you alone?" Harry asked.

"Certainly, I wanted to talk to you also." Professor Dumbledore said, turning to everyone else. "Thank you all. Mr. and Mrs. Delacour, Mr. and Mrs. Granger, could you wait near the Gargoyle downstairs? I am sure this won't take long and you can maybe have dinner with your children."

Harry walked over to Professor Berceau, "Professor, uh...I just want to say thank you for all that you did. Is there anything I can do to repay you?"

"Actually there is." She said smiling at the young man. "Let me know of anything strange that happens in your bond. You are in a unique situation Mr. Potter and anything you can tell me about the bond might help the next people who need my expertise." She gave the young man a hug, "You and your bond mates are always welcome at Veela Magical and if you ever need a question answered or just want to chat about the bond you know where to find me."

"Thank you." Harry said.

When everyone was gone except Padfoot, Professor Dumbledore sent a locking and silencing spell to the door. Turning back to Harry, "I presume you wanted to actually speak to Sirius?"

"Yes sir and with you as well."

Sirius transformed back into his human form. "How are you doing pup?"

"I'm doing great Sirius. We have a question for you."

"Ask away pup."

"I would like to tell my father about your case." Fleur said. "Not zat you are 'ere of course, but just zat you are 'arry's godfather and didn't get a trial."

Professor Dumbledore turned contemplative as Sirius asked "Why? What would that do?"

"Sirius." Dumbledore said, "When you were talking to Mr. Delacour, did he mention what he did for a living?"

"No, the subject never came up. It was always about Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle." Sirius replied.

"My father is the Deputy Minister of Magic in France Mr. Black." Fleur said.

"Mr. Black, from my godson's girlfriend? You have seriously got to call me Sirius." And he smiled at his joke.

"It's only funny the first thousand times Sirius," Harry said trying to control his smirk.

"Fine." Sirius said to his godson, then turning to Fleur. "Deputy Minister?" He let out a whistle. "So do you think he can do something about my case?"

"Actually yes, but maybe not until after they are publicly bonded." Professor Dumbledore said. "He could then do a complete background investigation on Harry on the pretext of making sure he doesn't have negative things that could affect his political career. He finds out you're his godfather. Escaped mass murderer is a godfather to his daughter's bond mate, he pushes for a full public investigation so everyone know he isn't trying to hide anything, and it comes to light you never had a trial. He can then publicly request a trial to lay to rest any possible problems."

Sirius looked at the Headmaster, then at his godson and then finally at the three ladies who were all smiling at him, he spoke quietly. "Yes please tell him. I want my name back."

"And we seriously want you to have Black back Sirius." Harry smirked at the double joke, then turning to Dumbledore, "What do you see happening with my summer now?"

"Harry." Professor Dumbledore sighed. "Before I answer that, I have something I want to ask you. I know from what I saw in your memories, how bad it has been for you. How you still managed to be the young man you are is amazing. But say you could take any action against the Dursleys, what would you do?"

Harry sat down in a chair in front of Dumbledore's desk and pondered that question, and then he looked at each of the ladies he now considered his family. "Sir, to tell you the truth, I probably wouldn't do anything to them. That doesn't mean I don't loathe them, but realistically they aren't worth my time. If their house blew up tomorrow I doubt I would weep at their graves but I wouldn't light the match that set the fire."

"Good." Professor Dumbledore said then a twinkle developed in his eyes, "But I sense that you would like to make life a little difficult for them. I know you have your mother's heart Harry, but do you have your father's sense of fun?"

"What do you mean?" Harry asked, but then saw Sirius looking at Dumbledore.

"Are you really thinking of that?" Sirius asked.

"WHAT?" Harry exclaimed.

Professor Dumbledore said, "I've already sent for Remus. I'm thinking the marauders might want to have some fun at the Dursley's expense. Something that might make their lives a little more interesting."

Harry looked at the Headmaster, "Did I hear that correctly? The Headmaster is telling us to go and prank the Dursley's?"

"That's what I heard Harry." Hermione replied. "I think he is trying to reach out to you. It won't fix the hurt you have suffered, but it's something."

"I agree 'Arry." Fleur said. " 'e has mentioned a couple of times, 'he is concerned about you losing 'is trust over zis. Zis is probably a token to help get it back. I zink 'e is trying."

"Yeah, he knows exactly which buttons to push doesn't he." Harry replied. "But I like the idea."

"Sir, I like that idea." Harry said to the Headmaster, "But may I suggest that we include the two greatest pranksters currently attending the school."

"The twins Harry?" Dumbledore asked. "They couldn't see Sirius."

"They can work with Lup...." Harry suddenly had a horrible thought. "The map. The bloody map. Moody has it. We have to get it before he see's Sirius."

"What map Harry?" Dumbledore said.

"The Marauder's Map sir." Harry said. "Moody found me with it before the second task. He asked to borrow it. It shows everyone in the castle. "

Sirius's face had turn almost white, "I've got to get out of here." He said. "Moody is the last person I need finding me."

It was at that time Hermione spoke up "Sir, about Sirius. That thing we used earlier to view Harry's memories. Why can't we show the Wizengamot our memories of what happened when we found Sirius and Pettigrew last year?" She asked. "Shouldn't that verify that Sirius is innocent?"

"The pensieve is not a viable testimonial device Miss Granger. " Dumbledore replied. "Memories cannot be used as evidence."

"But, but why not?" Hermione asked clearly not understanding.

"There is a potion you will learn about in the sixth year called Polyjuice potion." Dumbledore said then wondered why Harry turned

and smiled at Hermione. "It is a potion that allows the exact duplication of another person. Now you will agree that Harry and Draco Malfoy are less than friends would you not?"

"Everyone knows that." She replied.

"Exactly, now say Mr. Malfoy were to acquire some of this polyjuice potion and made himself look exactly like Harry here. Now say Mr. Malfoy were to attack someone right in front of you. Well not you anymore since you have an advantage of knowing what he was doing at that time, but say you before you bonded with Harry. You would have a memory of Harry Potter attacking someone. Would you want that memory being used in a court to convict and send Harry to Azkaban?"

"No of course not." Hermione said.

"Exactly, a pensieve is an excellent way to research memories as long as you have total confidence they are accurate memories." Dumbledore said. "Though you can tell if someone has tried to modify their own memories, no memory conveys a guarantee of truth. Now let's see what we can do about Sirius." Dumbledore turned to Sirius, "The cave?"

"That might be best," Sirius said with a look of misery. "I prefer to be cold than kissed."

Fleur had been listening to the conversation and offered a possibility. "Arry, can I presume ze Chamber of Secrets isn't on ze map?"

Harry looked at the Fleur and gave a smile. "Beautiful and intelligent, seems to be a common theme among all of my family." He turned to Sirius "What do you say? Probably isn't the best smelling place, but it might be better than being cold, and I guarantee it's secure. I'm the only one in the castle who can open it."

Dumbledore looked at Harry and Sirius. "It does offer possibilities. We can see about making you a portkey that will get you out if you have an emergency. And you only need to stay there until we can recover this map Harry's talking about."

"Won't hurt to look." Sirius said. "But let's hurry, I feel like that magical eye is on me right now."

A/N I had actually forgotten about Moody/crouch having the map, but as I was writing the last part of this chapter, I remembered it and had to bring it up to get it out of the way. I hadn't planned on the COS being part of this, at least not for Sirius, but it's not a bad place to hide out in.

Chapter 12

Sirius quickly transformed into Padfoot and a couple of minutes later Dumbledore, Harry, Padfoot, Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione were out the door and down the staircase. They all paused at the bottom where the Grangers and the Delacours were waiting for them.

"We apologize but we had an emergency matter come up in our discussions." Professor Dumbledore said as he addressed the parents. "It shouldn't take very long. Let me have Dobby escort you to the dining room we have set up for you. You can make yourselves comfortable and maybe spend time getting to know each other." He turned and called "Dobby?"

"Yes sir, Professor Dumbledore sir." The house elf said as he popped in beside the Headmaster.

"Could you show the Delacours and Grangers the way to the dining room?" Dumbledore asked.

Harry turned and looked at the young women beside him. "You don't have to come. It's not a very pleasant sight down there."

"I'm coming." Hermione replied. "I want to see the Chamber."

"Me too 'Arry." Fleur also replied.

Gabrielle hesitated but the words of the sorting hat came back into her mind. "It's your potential for bravery I look for. You most definitely have that." She looked at Harry nervously, "I need to come 'arry."

Harry stared for a few seconds at his youngest bondmate, and then nodded. "I'll be right beside you if you need me."

"I know."

Once Dobby had led away the parents, the group made their way quickly to Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. The sounds of the ghost emanated from the last stall. "Who's there?" The voice of the ghost called out.

"It's just us Myrtle." Harry answered. "We need to go into the Chamber."

"Harry, you're welcome in my toilet anytime." The ghost said almost happily.

Fleur recognized the ghost from the lake. She was the one who pointed Harry in the right direction. " 'Arry should we be jealous?" She teased.

Harry's cheeks turned red, "Of course not."

"You should zank 'er for 'er 'elp in ze lake." Fleur reminded him.

"You're right." Harry responded, then turning to the slivery ghost of the long dead student. "Myrtle, thanks for the helping Fleur and me in the lake. It really was appreciated."

Myrtle cheeks turned darker silver as it looked like she was blushing. "You..You're welcome Harry. I'd do anything for you." And then she ducked back into her stall.

"Shall we get into the Chamber?" Dumbledore asked reminding everyone what they were there for.

"Of course professor." Harry replied.

Harry found the correct sink and looking at the snake etched into the pipe he hissed "§Open Up§". The tap glowed a brilliant white and began to spin just as it had two years ago. The sink sunk out of sight and the large pipe that led the way to the Chamber was exposed.

Harry was getting ready to hop into the pipe when Hermione held him back. "Wait." She said as she looked into the pipe. "How do you get back out?" She asked.

Harry looked at her, "Well last time Fawkes flew us out."

Hermione looked again at the pipe and then back at Harry; she spent a few seconds chewing on her bottom lip as she concentrated. "Can you imagine Tom Riddle or Salazar Slytherin jumping down into a slimy pipe like that?"

Professor Dumbledore looked at the pipe. "You are quite correct Miss Granger. Tom would never have sullied himself in such a manner."

"But Ginny made it down to the Chamber." Harry said.

"I agree and she had made it back out previously without being flown up by Fawkes. Which suggests.." Dumbledore paused and looked around the bathroom, "There is another entrance for people to enter, and this one was used purely for the Basilisk."

Hermione looked around the bathroom, "Obviously this bathroom wasn't a bathroom a thousand years ago so Salazar didn't enchant that sink, that really only leaves Tom Riddle. When the bathroom was configured it must have covered up the actual entrance and he enchanted the sink to do what it does. There must be another entrance somewhere that has steps down. The problem is when the bathroom was being installed, a pipe might be ignored, but a set of steps wouldn't be. So they would have to be somewhere that wouldn't have been modified." She walked over to the exterior wall and started looking closely. "It's most likely on this wall somewhere. Does anyone see anything that looks like a snake?"

They spread out and looked around, until Hermione spotted a symbol she recognized from her non-magical math classes and her Ancient Runes class. A symbol that looked like the number eight lying on its side. "Of course, infinity or in Runes, Eternal, a symbol that looks like a forward and reversed joined S's but lying down like two joined snakes. The perfect symbol for Salazar." She thought.

"Professor Dumbledore, would Salazar have used the Rune Eternal for his symbol?" Hermione asked.

The Headmaster had walked over and was looking at the Rune carved into the stone. "He often used it in his texts, but never made claim to it as his mark. But looking at it here, I could imagine his fascination with that Rune. It also fits with his pureblood views since the one of the basic rules of Alchemy is that only something pure can last forever. Harry could you concentrate on this Rune and see if it is a door?"

Harry walked over and staring at the looping symbol he again hissed "§Open Up§" and this time a section of wall sunk out of sight and a

set of steps leading down were revealed. He immediately started toward them when he felt Professor Dumbledore's hand on his shoulder.

"Allow me to lead Harry. I expect either Salazar or Tom might have left traps for the unsuspecting." The Headmaster said and pulling out his wand, he entered the staircase. "Lumos." He said and the tip of his wand flared brilliant white. "Now everyone follow at a safe distance." Once Dumbledore had entered the staircase, Harry followed and Sirius transformed back into his human form followed him. Gabrielle went behind Sirius with Fleur and Hermione following up at the rear.

Once the group had descended about a hundred yards, the door behind them closed on its own, cutting off all light except that coming from the tip of Dumbledore's wand. Every other person in the group pulled out their own wands and cast the illumination spell. It was only another fifty yards when Dumbledore stopped and started looking at the walls.

"Notice how the footsteps in the dust seem to move around on this step?" He asked the group in general. "I believe the person coming down was disarming a trap of some sort." He cast his wand around and muttered a few phrases under his breath until a rock about shoulder high glowed blue. "Ah...there it is." A few more waves of his wand and. "It's safe enough now. I have permanently disabled it." He found two more similar traps before they reached the end of the long staircase.

The steps ended in a small tunnel which they followed. It ended in a larger tunnel with bones scattered everywhere. "There were a lot of bones where the pipe came out, so it might be around here somewhere." Harry said. He started moving around until he found the pipe jutting out of the wall. "Here it is, so the Chamber is that way." He pointed in the opposite direction.

They started down the tunnel and when they rounded a bend they came to the caved in spot where Harry and Ron had got separated. "That hole looks much smaller than it did two years ago." Harry thought to all three of his bond mates. He thought how small the second years looked to him now.

"Professor, can we expand that hole some?" Harry asked.

"I think so, but first I think we need to make sure the ceiling is secure." Dumbledore and Sirius both pulled out their wands and started casting spells that softly impacted the walls and ceiling of the tunnel. Where it hit, the rocks and dirt seemed to fuse together, Sirius noticed Hermione looking at them quizzically "It's a permanent sticking charm. It's a very useful spell. In this case it will stick the dirt and rocks together, and as long as you do the whole ceiling and walls, they won't cave in."

Once they had secured the ceiling and walls, everyone but Gabrielle started levitating the rocks away from the rubble, piling them up off to the side. Finally there was plenty of room to walk past the cave in. The first thing they saw once past that spot was the old basilisk skin. They all stopped and stared at it. Harry could feel the fear starting to build in Gabrielle and moved over to her and pulled her into a hug. "It's ok; it's just an old skin." As he helped her he could feel some of the fear start to ease away.

"Are you ok Gabi?" He thought.

"I...I'll be fine." She replied.

Sirius let out a whistle. "That large pup?"

"Uh...actually somewhat bigger." Harry replied as he led them further on down the tunnel. After several turns the tunnel ended at a blank wall with two serpents carved into it, each with giant emeralds glistening for eyes. Harry walked forward and hissed "§Open§" and the two snakes parted while the wall cracked open.

When they entered the dimly lit Chamber of Secrets, Dumbledore cast a light spell that illuminated the entire Chamber in a much brighter light that seemed to leave no shadows anywhere.

"Wished I had had that spell two years ago." Harry thought, but everyone else's attention was on the poisonous green body of a sixty foot long and six foot wide Basilisk laying dead on the floor, looking like Harry had just killed it yesterday.

No matter how many times a story is told, or in the case of the young woman Harry sharing the memories in his mind, seeing the monster in its entirety puts the enormity of what Harry had done in

perspective. Harry found himself surround by three women as shock, pride, horror, love and admiration flowed through the bond to him.

"This is what petrified me and you had to face?" Hermione asked.

"It was two years ago love. Thanks to Fawkes I'm alive." Harry replied.

Gabrielle had buried her face in Harry's shoulder. He put his arm around her and held her. "It's a battle two years past Gabi. The basilisk is dead and nothing to be frightened of." Harry felt Gabrielle nod softly into his shoulder. He put his lips to her hair and kissed. "Stay with me. I won't let anything hurt you."

Fleur looked at Harry then her lips were on his and as she pulled away he heard. "Never doubt yourself 'Arry. Even wiz ze 'elp you 'ad most adult wizards and witches would 'ave fainted or ran away at sight of zat monster."

"I didn't have a choice." Harry thought. "Ginny would have died and Voldemort would have returned."

"You 'ad a choice and you chose to fight." Fleur responded. "Most would 'ave ran and let ozers fight."

Harry had no response and just nodded at his bond mate.

Dumbledore himself was having trouble imagining Harry standing in the chamber with nothing more than a sword in his hand being confronted by the monster before him. He chuckled a little to himself, "Two hundred points wasn't nearly enough." He started walking toward the giant carcass and Sirius joined him.

"Can you believe this thing?" Sirius asked. "How did the pup do it?"

"A little luck and a lot of courage and heart." The Headmaster replied. "When Harry told me it was sixty feet long, I thought it was a young man's imagination of size. But if anything it's more than that."

Sirius turned to the Headmaster, "Why is it still here? Or I should say why isn't it decomposing?"

"This beast was a thousand years old Sirius." Professor Dumbledore said. "The amount of magic in this thing was enormous. It will take a long time before the ravages of time can catch up to it, even in death."

"Are we sure it's the only one down here?" Sirius asked.

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled, "That's for you to find out while you're down here." Then seeing the startled look on Sirius's face he continued. "I really doubt there is enough food down here to sustain more than one Basilisk. If there was ever more than one, they would have turned on each other for food a long time ago."

"I guess all in all, this is better than the cave." Sirius said. "At least until it warms up outside. What about Buckbeak? I've been going up there to feed him, but I can't now."

"Do you think he would mind being down here?" Dumbledore asked.

"It's more spacious than the cave." Sirius replied. "With the ceiling this high, he might even be able to stretch his wings. But how do you plan on getting him down here?"

"I think I know of a way." Dumbledore replied. "Now what else do you need down here?"

"I'll conjure myself a bed and other niceties but I'll need food and would like things to read." Sirius replied.

"I think we can manage that." Dumbledore turned, "Dobby?" and waited...finally after a minute. "I guess he can't get down here or can't hear me. That makes sense. If the elves could apparate into here, the Chamber would have been found well before now." He found a rock on the ground and pointing his wand at it, he murmured "Portus." and the rock glowed blue. "We'll test this on the way out to make sure it works and get you a new one if it does. As for food, I'll get Harry and Dobby to bring you a trunk full of food that will last you for a couple of weeks just to be on the safe side."

"Weeks?" Sirius asked.

"It could be longer if Alastor has noticed you on this map." Dumbledore replied. "We'll see about different accommodations if it goes on too long."

By then Harry and his bond mates had walked over to them "Don't worry Sirius, I'll come visit you."

"WE will come visit you." Hermione said.

"Yes we will." Fleur said as Gabrielle nodded. "You're 'Arry's family. It will be good to get to know you." She pulled out her wand with a couple of spells a table and chairs had been conjured. "We can always come down 'ere and do 'omework togezer."

"Excellent," Dumbledore said. "Sirius as of now do you need anything else?"

"I think I'll manage." Sirius said, "Just don't forget about me."

"We wouldn't do that." Harry said.

"Is there anything I can do about big, green and poisonous here?" Sirius asked pointing to the monster.

Dumbledore looked at the carcass, and then looking at Harry, "I think it should belong to you Harry."

"What would I do with it sir?" Harry asked.

"Harry, most of that creature can be sold. It's worth a substantial amount of galleons."

"I..." Harry had begun to say he didn't want any of it. But Mr. Granger's words came to mind, "With three wives to support?" He would need Galleons to support them if it was needed and this would be a good start he thought to himself.

Hermione and Fleur looked at Harry, "You don't have to do that Harry." Hermione thought. "We already told you it's not just your responsibility."

"But isn't it better to have the Galleons and not need them, than need them and not have them." Harry replied. "Besides we can give

it to charity of the House-Elf cause if we don't need it." Harry smiled at Hermione.

Harry looked at Fleur, "What do you think Fleur. Take him up on the offer?"

"What would 'appen to the money if you didn't take it?" Fleur asked.

"Good question." Harry replied and turning to Dumbledore, "What would happen to the money if I didn't take it sir?"

"Harry, the school board or the Ministry would end up with it. " Dumbledore replied. "Presume most of it would be embezzled by certain influential members and the rest squandered on some pet project."

"Definitely take ze galleons 'Arry." Fleur said. "You've earned it."

"Fine sir, if there is money made from the remains, please have the Galleons put in a vault in mine, Hermione, Fleur and Gabrielle's names. " Harry replied to the Headmaster. "Also I will want some of it to go to the Weasley's or at least Ron and Ginny."

A mixture of surprise and shock poured over the bond. Harry smiled at being able to get some surprise in on them.

"Non 'Arry." Fleur said, "It's your money."

"Harry, what was that?" Hermione asked. "I can't take your money."

"Ladies, you are all my family. What is mine is yours, including this money." Harry responded firmly. "I'm not changing my mind."

Professor Dumbledore looked at Harry, "Very well. I have an associate who can make arrangements to sell the remains. He'll of course want a cut of the profits."

"That's fine Professor." Harry responded. "I'm sure whatever you think is fair will work."

"I'll contact Mundungus immediately. He specializes in finding buyers for unusual objects." Dumbledore said. "Of course if people

are down here rendering the beast down, you'll need to stay out of the way Sirius. Look around and see if you can find places to hide."

"I'll give me something to do Albus." Sirius said. "I'll map out this whole chamber. See if I can brighten it up some."

"Ok, since that is settled." Dumbledore started. "We need to get the rest of you to a Dinner. I am sure the ladies' parents are wondering what the emergency was. Now as we are leaving, we should have someone test the portkey... Not you Harry." As he saw Harry getting ready to volunteer, "We might need your Parseltongue abilities."

"Is there any risk Professor?" Harry asked.

"No there are no risks with it. It will either take the person to the bathroom upstairs or it will not work."

"I'll do it Professor." Hermione spoke up.

"Excellent, just tap the rock with your wand and say bathroom."

A few seconds later Hermione disappeared.

"Harry, you can tell Professor Dumbledore it worked. I'm in the bathroom." Hermione told Harry.

"Sir, it worked, she's there." Harry relayed.

"Excellent." Dumbledore "I was worried when Dobby didn't come, that portkeys wouldn't work either. " He thought for a few seconds. "House-elves were around at the time of the founders, but portkeys have only been around for the last three hundred years. I would guess Salazar configured the Chamber to block house-elves from the Chamber. They would not be worthy of entering his hallowed grounds." He reached down and picked up another rock and with a "Portus" another portkey was created. He handed it to Sirius. "This will get you out of here if there is an emergency." Then turning to Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle, we could portkey out, but I want to walk back the way we came to make sure there isn't a problem getting out on foot."

Harry turned to Sirius, "We'll bring that food down in just a couple of hours. Once we finish the dinner with the parents."

"That's fine pup, I'll start doing a little exploring and see if there is any place to put a bed." Sirius replied.

"Harry, I want to try something while I'm up here." Hermione said over the bond. "Could you remember yourself asking this wall to open?"

"I guess but why?"

"Just do it Harry. I want to see it."

Harry brought up the memory she wanted.

"Thanks." Hermione said and a few seconds later. "I did it. I actually did it."

"Did what love?"

"I opened the wall." Hermione replied.

"How?"

"Do you remember when you cast your Patronus against the Dementors, you said you knew you could do it, because you had already done it?"

"Yes."

"Well this was similar, I have your memory of it, and I could feel what you did. So I just did the same." Hermione said. "I can't speak parseltongue, but I can mimic what you've done using it."

"But how? I can't even tell if I'm speaking it or not." Harry asked.

"That's because you can speak parseltongue, so the words come natural to you." Hermione said. "I don't speak it so I can hear the difference. Does that make sense?"

"Not really but I'm glad it works." Harry replied. "It means you can get down to Sirius if I'm not available."

"It means a lot more than that Harry. Don't you see?" Hermione replied excitedly. "If we can do this with other things, the potential is limitless. I might be able to learn the Patronus Charm from you by just reliving your memory of casting it."

"Do I get you limitless supply of spells?" Harry asked with happiness of a smile across the bond.

"As long as you figure out which ones you want to ask for." Hermione replied. "But think of the potential if this works. We could learn twice as many spells or actually four times as many if you include Fleur and Gabrielle." Hermione's excitement was pouring over the bond.

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves." Harry said. "Let's get Fleur and Gabrielle and test it tomorrow to see."

"OK...fine." Hermione said obviously annoyed that Harry wasn't sharing in her enthusiasm.

"Run the idea past Fleur and Gabrielle while we are walking back up." Harry said. "We might test it later tonight. Ok love?"

The thought of Hermione learning at four times her normal speed frightened Harry. "Well it wouldn't be four times her speed, since I can't learn as fast as she can."

Hermione was listening in on him and Harry could hear her smirking as she thought; "Guess I need to get your studying habits changed some."

"Remind me again why I love you." Harry thought.

"Prat."

Harry had an arm around Fleur and the other around Gabrielle as they and Dumbledore left the Chamber of Secrets, once past the guarding snakes the walls closed behind them with a hiss. A few minutes later they were past the snake skin and further on they found Hermione waiting for them at the bottom of the staircase.

"How did you come to be down here Miss Granger?" Professor Dumbledore asked. "Harry said the portkey took you took the bathroom."

"It worked fine sir." Hermione replied. "We just figured out a way for me to open the door."

"But you're not a parseltongue." The Headmaster said.

"True sir, but I was able to mimic the action exactly because I have an exact image from what Harry did." Hermione explained.

Professor Dumbledore studied her for a short time "I wonder if the same could be done through a pensieve memory."

"I doubt it sir." Hermione said. "The pensieve only deals with external senses, sight, sound and such. With Harry I can feel what he did and was able to mimic the actions exactly."

"Ah, a very useful talent." Dumbledore said. "I can already see that you are imagining ways to utilize it."

"Yes sir." Hermione said as a blush crept onto her face.

It was another few minutes before the group had made it back up the steps and into the bathroom. Once the wall had closed behind them Professor Dumbledore turned and cast several spells at the spot where the door was located. "Amazing magic." He murmured. "Nothing I do reveals either a door, or an opening behind that wall. I think after Sirius is gone from there, we might see about opening it permanently."

The youth made a quick stop by their rooms for a shower, each of them felt like being next to the Basilisk made them feel grimy. When they were all showered and dressed they made it to the private dining room that had been set up for them. As they entered, Mr. and Mrs. Granger looked at their daughter.

"Dear, we have been having a lovely conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Delacour." Jean Granger said. "Have you forgotten to tell us things that go on at this school?"

"Oh no!" Hermione screamed to Harry then to her mother. "Like what mother?"

"Oh, we must have missed the owls mentioning Trolls and giant snakes and Dragons." Richard Granger said looking sharply at his daughter.

"Yeah...um." Hermione sputtered as she blushed and looked at Harry.

"Ma'am, sir." Harry jumped in. "Hermione just didn't want you to worry about her. The magical world is much more dangerous than the non-magical world."

The elder Grangers looked at their daughter's boyfriend. "So why should she stay in a place that is much more dangerous?"

"Your daughter is magical sir." Harry said his gaze steady on Hermione's father. "Though the dangers are greater, the ability she has to defend herself is also much greater."

"Zis is true sir." Fleur spoke up. "Your daughter with a wand in the magical world is more able to defend 'erself zan in your world without one."

Richard Granger let out a sigh as he looked at his daughter. "I can't protect you anymore can I princess? You have your castle and your Prince." He looked at Harry who had moved to Hermione's side and put his arm around her waist. "She looks to you now." Mr. Granger shook his head a little, "You have to understand that when I look at you Harry, I see a young man who should be out playing football or lounging around watching TV with a group of friends, not fighting real monsters in some medieval castle." He held out his hand to Harry. "Take care of my girl, Harry. If anything does happen to her, I will find you."

"We look to each other sir." Harry said taking Richard's hand. "She's already saved my life more than once. I will promise you this though; I will always do my best when it comes to protecting your daughter." Harry looked over at the Delacours who had been following the conversation "And your daughters as well. I can't promise their safety only that if any danger they face will have to come through me to get to them."

Hermione wrapped her arms around her father's neck. "Dad, I'm always going to be your daughter as long as you accept that I live in a different world sometimes."

Mrs. Granger took her daughter's hand. "So tell us about this troll."

"Do you remember my first few letters that I wasn't really happy? And then after Halloween I had met Harry?" Hermione started. "Well on Halloween night, I had been crying in a bathroom because a classmate had insulted me again. While in there a twelve foot tall monster shows up with a huge club and a boy with the most dazzling green eyes leaps out of nowhere onto the back of it..." and for the rest of the dinner the Grangers were told of all the adventures their daughter had gone through with Harry except the rescue of Sirius. The Delacours even brought out a copy of the newspaper article that showed Harry's picture riding on his broom against the dragon in the first event earlier in the year. By the end of dessert Mr. and Mrs. Granger were looking at Harry in an entirely different manner. They now understood what they saw lurking behind the innocence in his eyes.

After dinner was over and a final hug for their daughter, promises of letters, and seeing them in a few months for the summer, Professor Dumbledore created another portkey and transported the elder Grangers back to their house.

After the Grangers had left, Fleur turned to her father. "Papa, before you go, can we tell you something?"

"Of course."

"Sir." Harry started. "Are you familiar with Sirius Black?"

"Ze murderer who broke out of your Prison?" Mr. Delacour said. "'E killed a lot of muggles and..." He hesitated.

"And supposedly betrayed my parents." Harry finished for him.

"Supposedly?"

"Yes sir." Harry replied. "Sirius is innocent. I met him last year, along with the person who really betrayed my parents and killed those people."

"We've seen it Papa." Gabrielle said. "Harry and Hermione both were there when Sirius confronted the real murderer. The other person Peter Pettigrew confessed, but he escaped."

Mr. Delacour looked cautiously at Harry "And you wanted to tell me zis why?"

"He's my godfather sir." Harry said quietly. "He was my father's best friend. He broke out of Azkaban risking being kissed by a Dementor to protect me because he knew the real murderer was close to me. Fleur," Harry looked over at her, "Thought you might be able to do something."

"Dementors." Mr. Delacour spit out, "Barbaric. We do not use zem in our prisons." He got a thoughtful look on his face. " 'Arry, once we can formally announce your bond to my daughters, I can do something. I will 'ave a legitimate reason to investigate you. Understand, if I do call for an investigation, everyzing will come out. You 'ave to consider if you 'ave any secrets you don't want revealed."

"Compared to my godfather's freedom?" Harry asked. "Nothing of that importance." Harry didn't think anyone could uncover his and Hermione's helping Sirius and Buckbeak escape.

"Very well 'Arry. We will discuss what we can do when you visit during ze summer." Mr. Delacour said.

"Thank you sir." Harry said. "I am sorry to impose upon you."

Alian smiled at Harry. "My eldest knows I would do it for 'er."

"Of course Papa. You're the best father in the world." Fleur said.

"Thank you Fleur." Harry thought.

"Anyzing for you my love." Fleur said.

"Now if you will excuse us." Mrs. Delacour said. "We need to get back to our room. We will be leaving tomorrow to go back 'ome."

"Will you be back for the third task?" Fleur asked.

"With both you and 'Arry as champions? Of course ma petite. " Mr. Delacour said. "Any idea on what zey are planning for you?"

"No Papa. Not yet."

"Well I expect you two to be careful. " He said addresses Harry and Fleur "Take care of each other, your safety is more important zan anything else."

"Of course sir." Harry said.

Mr. Delacour shook Harry's hand and gave hugs to each of the girls. When he got to Hermione he said, "I am serious when I say you are now part of our family. When you come in the summer you're more than welcome to invite your parents. We 'ave plenty of room and it will give zem a chance to experience a magical 'ousehold."

"Thank you sir." Hermione smiled. "I appreciate that and I will certainly invite them."

Mrs. Delacour hugged her daughters, and then when she got to Harry she smiled at him. "Again 'Arry welcome to ze family. You are a very special young man. I look forward to seeing you again later in ze year and definitely during ze summer."

"Your daughters are very special ma'am." Harry responded blushing. "I will try to make them happy."

"I zink you're off to a good start." Apolline said and kissed Harry on his cheek then after giving Hermione a hug, she and her husband left the bond mates alone.

"We need to get food down to Sirius." Harry said,

"And get our homework started." Hermione said. "We have Herbology, Care of Magical Creatures and you have divinations while I have ancient runes on Monday."

"Fleur, what classes are you taking this year?" Harry asked.

"I'm taking Transfiguration, Potions, Charms, Ancient Runes and Magical Government and Law." Fleur said.

"We don't have a Government and Law class." Hermione said. "I wish we did, it's hard to find out how our government works sometimes."

Fleur snorted. "We do comparison studies between our government and yours in class. Yours keeps ze power in ze 'ands of very few people."

"But we have elections." Hermione said.

"When's ze last time a non-magical born person was elected to your Minister of Magic position?" Fleur asked. "Ze answer is never. Ze problem is your ministry controls ze major information outlet for your magical world. Your Daily Prophet is a joke when eet comes to election coverage. Galleons control which stories are published and which are not."

Hermione sat back in her chair and looked at her bond sister. "Are you sure?"

"Eet is ze belief of my Government Professor and Madam Maxine." Fleur said. "From what I've seen the paper definitely 'as issues but we can discuss it another time. As for my 'omework, Madam Maxine gave me mine as zey were leaving Professor Dumbledore's office. She also gave me ze work Gabrielle would 'ave needed to work on, but not sure 'ow zat is going to go over with 'er switching to 'ogwarts classes."

"Ok we have a couple of hours until curfew and this is our last night together." Harry said, "So let's get the food down to Sirius" then looking at Hermione "and get our homework from Ron. Why don't you and Fleur run the food down to Sirius and I'll take Gabrielle with me to Gryffindor tower and get our homework. Where is your book bag?"

"Should be in on my bed. Have one of the girls grab it for you." Hermione said.

With that division of labor, Fleur and Hermione got the shrunken trunk of food from Dobby and headed off toward the Chamber of Secrets while Harry and Gabrielle went off toward the tower.

Harry and Gabrielle entered the Gryffindor common room a short time later. Ron was playing Dean Thomas in a game of Chess. Neville was in front of the fireplace reading. Ginny was sitting at a table chatting with a girl from her class and the twins were causing a commotion at the back of the room.

"It's Harry." Neville said and all eyes turned toward the two of them.

"Hi guys." Harry said and he was swarmed by everyone. Several of the boys were focused on Gabrielle.

"I..we've been so worried Harry" Ginny said.

"Why didn't you tell us you were coming back tonight?" Fred said.
"Wait we can make a run and still get a party in tonight."

"Wait guys, first those of you staring at the young lady beside me please don't. Now," Harry said stopping George from getting out of the common room. "I'm not back officially until tomorrow. I just need my homework tonight. They want to keep me..uh..for one more night."

"Ok, so party tomorrow night?" George asked. "We have a getting Harry back and Harry finishing the second task and Harry saving lives parties to hold. Though that last reason for a party is getting a little too common."

"How about Friday night?" Harry asked. "I'm so far behind in my homework it's going to take all week to catch up."

"You're starting to sound like Hermione." Ron said. "Homework before a good party?"

"I'm two weeks behind Ron." Harry replied, "Would you want to face Snape without two weeks worth of homework?"

Fred noticed Harry's hand around Gabrielle's waist. "What's this Harry? Why do I see one of your appendages wrap around the waist of this beautiful young lady? Who is she? What's the scoop?"

"Everyone, this is Gabrielle Delacour." Harry said smiling at his young bond mate. He could feel her nervousness through the bond. "She's Fleur's, I mean the Beauxbaton's champion's sister and...my girlfriend." He pulled her close and kissed her on her head.

Harry noticed Ginny's eyebrow go up and a frown come onto her face.

Fred and George slapped Harry on the back. "Way to go man." Fred said. "If I had known they were this beautiful of prizes at the bottom of the lake I would have jumped in, Champion or not. I'm kidding Harry. We've heard some of the rumors and we know it wasn't fun for you. We're just glad you're ok." Then turning to Gabrielle, "And you too Miss Delacour."

"Gabrielle please. Nice to meet you..."

"I'm Fred or am I George?"

"They are the school pranksters but you couldn't ask for better friends." Harry thought to Gabrielle.

"Nope..that's right I'm Gred and this is Forge." Fred said with a wink. "At least for tonight."

Gabrielle found herself smiling at their antics.

"Now if you need anything, just ask, in fact we have some great creams over here just begging to be eaten."

"Don't take ANY food from them." Harry thought. "They gave my cousin a candy that made his tongue several feet long. Now Dudley deserved it, but they are creative."

"No zank you." Gabrielle said.

Fred looked at Harry, "You warned her didn't you?"

"She's my girlfriend, of course I warned her." Harry replied then turning to Ron, "Do you have my homework mate?"

"I put it in your book bag." Ron said. "Have you seen Hermione? She's been gone all week."

"Yeah she..uh had her parents here today and I helped her show them around. We are going to study tonight together since we are both so far behind."

"Where are you staying?" Ron asked. "I stopped by the hospital wing, but you weren't in one of the beds."

"I just needed rest so they put me in the rooms off the hospital wing they have for people who are visiting."

"Oh, I didn't know. I should have asked Madam Pomfrey." Ron said. "Well I'll see you tomorrow?"

"Of course mate." Harry replied. "Have something to tell you tomorrow."

Ron turned to Gabrielle, "I'm Ron, Harry's best mate."

"Nice to meet you Ron." Gabrielle said as she smiled at Ron.

"Uh..yeah. nice to meet you as well."

Harry turned to Ginny. "Gin could you grab Hermione's book bag? She says it is on your bed. Also Gabrielle is going to be taking classes here at Hogwarts for the rest of the year. She's going to be in your classes. Can you tell her what homework you have for the few days?"

Ginny was staring at Gabrielle now. "Why are you taking classes here?"

Gabrielle could feel the dislike radiating from Ginny. " 'arry, Ginny doesn't like me. I zink she still likes you." She looked at Ginny and replied. "Personal reasons concerning my transformation. Besides my sister is a seventh year and zis gives me a chance to spend time wiz 'er. Not to mention with 'Arry." She emphasized the last bit by kissing Harry on the lips. "Isn't 'e ze bravest man? 'E saved mine and my sisters lives."

"Mean aren't you?" Harry asked.

"Just making sure she knows you are unavailable." Gabrielle answered.

"I..yeah Harry's very brave." Ginny replied. "He saved my life two years ago." Her eyes flickered to Harry's. "I'll get Hermione's book bag." She turned and went up the steps, and a few minutes later she returned with the bag and a parchment. Harry could see she was fighting back tears. "Here." Ginny said. "I wrote down my assignments for this entire week."

"Zank you Ginny." Gabrielle said.

"Well we better get going." Harry said. "I have a lot of homework to do."

" 'Arry can you go ahead, I'll catch up." Gabrielle said. "I want to 'ave a quick word with Ginny."

"Don't hurt her. She has always been nice to me." Harry replied.

"Zat's why I want to talk to 'er. I need a friend in my class. I hope it can be 'er."

"Ok" Harry replied then to Ginny and everyone else. "I'll see everyone tomorrow. Party on Friday."

Once Harry was out of the portrait hole, Gabrielle turned to Ginny. "Ginny, 'Arry 'as told me a lot about you. But I know you like 'im."

Ginny inhaled sharply. "How?"

"I'm part Veela Ginny. I can tell." Gabrielle said. "You know 'Arry zinks of you as 'is little sister."

Ginny looked down. "I know, but..."

" 'E's my bon..boyfriend Ginny." Gabrielle said. " 'E's your friend. Can we be friends? Or will zat be too much of a problem for you."

"You've only known Harry for two weeks." Ginny said. "Is it really something serious between you two?"

"I zink so." Gabrielle said looking at the red headed witch in front of her. "I love 'im Ginny. "

Ginny stared at the silvery blonde girl in front of her. "Are you sure?"

"Yes I am." Gabrielle replied. "Again it comes from being Veela. I also know 'Arry wouldn't want to lose your friendship. So can we be friends?"

"Honestly?" Ginny replied. "Let me sleep on it. It's been a shock to see 'Arry with you."

"Of course." Gabrielle smiled. "Maybe we'll see each ozer tomorrow. If not zen in class on Monday." She then turned and walked out of the Gryffindor common room.

"That was nice of you." Harry said as he fell in step beside his girlfriend and put his arm around her.

Listening in?"

"Of course, Ginny has a temper." Harry replied. "She's also famous for her bat-bogey hex."

"What's a bat bogey 'ex?" Gabrielle asked.

"Her brothers say having bats coming out of your nose and attacking you isn't a lot of fun." Harry explained.

"Gross. You English people can be disgusting." Gabrielle exclaimed.

"Harry, food has been delivered and Sirius asked me to tell you he is all comfy and not to worry about him." Hermione's mental voice said. "We'll be back in the room in fifteen or twenty minutes."

"Ok love." Harry replied. "See you then."

When they were all back in the common room of their temporary quarters, they got started on the homework that was due on Monday. Harry really wanted to get into Hogsmeade the next day but he knew he was only going to have time to do that if he got a significant portion of his homework done in the next few hours.

Another slow chapter. The next chapter will deal with the Sunday of this weekend, and then we should pick up some speed in getting to the final task. Still have lots to deal with. Pranking the Dursley's, getting the map, Draco, Rita Skeeter, Victor Krum, and lots of other stuff.

Later that evening Gabrielle and Harry had gone off to their respective beds leaving Fleur and Hermione still doing their homework. After a while Hermione looked over at Fleur. "Fleur may I ask a personal question?"

Fleur looked up from her essay and giving Hermione a smile, "You can ask me anyzing 'Ermione. No secrets between bond sisters."

"Do..do you really consider me your sister?" Hermione asked, "Or is that just a phrase to describe our relationship? I mean I like, well I enjoy having another girl I can talk to about things and..." She swept her arms over the books in front of them both, "who seems to share my passion for learning. The other girls in my dorm seem to only want to talk about boys or make up or clothes."

Fleur smiled, "Yes 'ermione, you are my sister and I 'ope my friend." Her smiled fade a little. "I don't 'ave any real friends."

Hermione looked at Fleur, "But I would think you would be very popular. I mean you're.."

"Beautiful?" Fleur asked.

"Well yeah. Every boy would want to date you." Hermione said.

"Zey do, but 'ow do I know zey are dating me because of me, or because of my allure." Fleur said. "None of ze girls will come around me because of ze effects I 'ave on zeir boyfriends, and ze boys all start acting foolish around me." She stopped and got a thoughtful look on her face. "I did 'ave friends when I was a young girl."

"Had?" Hermione asked. "What happened?"

"You saw Gabrielle before she transformed?" Fleur asked and when Hermione nodded she continued. "We Veela stop maturing physically when we are eight or nine, so as my friends got older zey didn't want to play wiz someone who looked so much younger zan zey were. Zey stopped coming over, stopped inviting me places and ze friendships died. Zat's when I started turning to books and learning. Zat is also why Gabrielle is so important to me. I knew what she was going zrough an 'oped to be zere for 'er. Zat's one of ze reasons she 'ad a crush on 'Arry, or at least ze boy-who-lived. It was 'er escape from ze loneliness."

"He hates that title you know." Hermione said.

Fleur smiled, "Yes, but like everyone else, I really never zought about ze title bringing zoughts of 'is parents dying. We need to remember to something for 'Arry on 'alloween each year."

"Halloween is a mixed day for me." Hermione said. "Harry's parents died that day, but it's the day I started living. It's the day Harry became my friend. I'll never forget those eyes looking at me when he jumped on that troll's back."

"And now 'e is your bond mate who loves you very much." Fleur said.

"And you are my bond sister and my friend." Hermione said.

"So what ees your personal question you wanted to ask me?" Fleur said.

"Well...I just wanted to know..well what does it mean to be a Veela. I mean do you have all of the powers? I read about them and we saw Veela at the World Cup and they...." Hermione asked blushing.

"No need to be embarrassed." Fleur said. "You're part of a Veela bond of course you should know about zem. In fact my grandmuzzer will insist you learn all about zem when you come for ze summer." Fleur looked at a far wall in thought for a few seconds, then turning back to Hermione, "Yes, if you are part Veela, you are Veela. So I 'ave ze powers as you say. I 'ave ze allure but don't normally project as much as a full or 'alf Veela would. If my grandmuzzer walks into a room wiz men zey are almost entirely 'opeless. I 'ave ze power of beauty and of course," Fleur grimaced, "zere is ze second form I'll take if I get very angry or scared."

"So you...." Hermione started but nothing else would come out as she looked at Fleur. "Fireballs?" she finally squeaked out.

Fleur smiled and patted Hermione's hand "Yes, but I 'ave to be very angry or frightened. I've only changed twice in my life." She looked a little pensive at Hermione, "I 'ope zat doesn't stop you from wanting to be my sister and friend."

"No, of course not Fleur." Hermione said. "Can you try not to burn up our boyfriend though? He can be very frustrating at time. His stubbornness can be infuriating."

Fleur let out a small giggle, "I'll try not to. Now can you tell me something about 'Arry? Why isn't 'e affected by my allure? Not that I'm complaining, it's one of ze zings I love about 'im, but I'm just curious."

"I don't know how it works, but is it something like the imperius curse?" Hermione asked. "Harry can shake off that curse easily now."

" 'Arry can fight off the imperius curse?" Fleur asked. " 'Ow would...who?"

"Our Defense against the Dark Arts teacher taught us the Unforgivables this year. " Hermione explained. "He wanted us to know what the imperius curse felt like. So he had us do quirky things like hop or skip around the room while under the curse. But Harry was the only one who could fight it. Professor Moody tried four times with Harry and on the fourth time, Harry had no trouble at all of casting it off."

"Do you zink 'e will try eet on Gabrielle?" Fleur asked with a hint of concern in her voice.

"We had that lesson before you arrived so I doubt it." Hermione replied then thinking about Mad-Eye Moody, "But it wouldn't hurt to let her know about it. She can talk to Harry if he does try it. I wonder though.."

"Wonder what?"

"With our bond, would it have an effect on the curse?" Hermione answered. "Harry said he was able to fight it because his voice in his head countered the curse's directions. So can our voices fight off the curse on one of us? In other words if someone is trying to put the curse on me, can Harry help?"

"I would prefer not to be under ze curse to find out." Fleur said. "Nor can we ask 'im wizout referring to ze bond."

"Maybe we can ask Professor Dumbledore." Hermione said. "Or Professor Berceau." She chuckled a little, "Merlin, I feel like I'm living in a science experiment." She looked back at Fleur, "Telepathy, shared experiences and emotions, I'm worried I going to wake up soon back at home having fallen asleep watching an episode of Dr. Who."

"Dr. Who?" Fleur asked quizzically.

"Ah..a Non-Magical TV show." Hermione answered. "It's a..a..well it's hard to explain. Maybe you can visit my house and watch it with me. We can have a sister's night in with popcorn."

"I would like zat 'ermione." Fleur said.

"It's amazing how wrong first impressions can be." Hermione said. "I'm sorry to say when I first saw you in the Great Hall I disliked you. You were beautiful and half the boys in the hall were falling over themselves trying to look at you. Even at the Yule Ball the opinion I already had carried over. I never thought about who you were on the inside. Now a couple of months later I find I was entirely wrong. You're smart, kind and well I don't know.... Someone I can trust." Hermione looked at her bond sister. "I..I don't know if I'll ever be able to thank you and Gabrielle enough for inviting me into your bond with Harry. Being able to feel his love for me, it's incredible."

"Zere will never be a need to zank us." Fleur said. "We took somezing from you. Made claims to ze one you loved. We are ze ones zankful."

"Maybe." Hermione said. "But do you think without the bond Harry would have been able to work through his emotions? Or either of us would have risked our friendship without knowing for sure the other felt the same? I mean I only realize my love for him a few days ago, and though I was going to hint at it, at the first sign he wasn't feeling the same way I...well I wouldn't have risked his friendship."

Fleur smiled, "We'll call us even zen so we can concentrate on making our bond mate 'appy."

"Even." Hermione agreed then she remembered another question she had, "You mentioned earlier that you had the power of beauty, what does that mean? Is it something besides your allure?"

"Yes eet ees different." Fleur replied. "Ze magic gives us a natural beauty. Veela never get a rash or acne, nor is zere ever a need for makeup." She held up her hand, "We don't even have to clip our nails. I'll paint them occasionally, but even if one is damaged my magic will fix it. We also have magic over our hair."

"I thought you wanted me to like you." Hermione joked as she looked at her own uneven nails. "I know I'm going to regret this considering the unruly stuff I have, but what kind of magic do you have over your hair."

Fleur closed her eyes and Hermione watched as Fleur's silvery blonde hair glowed and an instant later soft curls ran down the length of her perfect silvery blonde hair.

"That really isn't fair." Hermione complained but her smile clearly made it light hearted. "I have to spend an hour brushing this bushy stuff out."

"Get your brush 'ermione. Let's see if I can help." Fleur said.

Hermione looked at her curiously but disappeared into her bedroom and brought her brush out. Fleur took it from her and motioning for Hermione to turn around, she started pulling the brush through the younger woman's hair. When the brush made no resistance, but came through the hair, Hermione whirled around, "How did you do that?"

"Actually, I didn't do anyzing, yet." Fleur said as she looked at the brush. " 'Ere, you try it." And she handed the brush back to Hermione.

Hermione took the brush and start brushing her hair only to find it gliding through her hair easily. "But..how?" She ran the brush through her hair again and again with no trouble.

"I don't know." Fleur said. "But you 'ave Veela magic touching you. It's possible you're picking up some of zat magic." At the look on Hermione's face. "I doubt your 'air is going to turn blonde and you'll start enchanting men....outside of enchanting ze only one zat matters, but ze magic might be affecting you. I doubt you'll complain if it 'elps you calm your hair."

Hermione looked toward the ceiling, "If I'm dreaming, I better not ever wake up."

Fleur giggled. "I don't zink zis is a tv dream sister." She looked over at her homework. "I zink I'm finished for tonight. Eet's going to take a little while to catch up. What are we doing tomorrow?"

"Besides more homework?" Hermione asked. "Maybe we should work on it down in the Chamber tomorrow. Keep Sirius company. Harry will want to go to Hogsmeade. If we go there first thing, he can buy Sirius some jokes stuff and candy." She remembered something she had told Harry. "Oh we should get Harry to buy himself some clothes. The things he wears are horrid."

"Zree women taking zeir boyfriend clothes shopping?" Fleur asked. "Sounds like fun to me."

"It'll be more fun after the bond announced." Hermione said. "Then we can all have a go at him."

"Ok, Hogsmeade, zen Chamber for 'omework." Fleur said. "Anyzing else?"

"Snogging Harry time?" Hermione said smiling.

"I would like zat." Fleur said. "I also want to learn to open ze Chamber."

"And we can see about learning spells with Harry." Hermione said. "I really want to learn the Patronus Charm."

"Is 'Arry's really a Stag?" Fleur asked. "Fully Corpereal?"

"You'll love it." Hermione said. "It's almost like a living animal."

"Anozer zing to try in ze Chamber tomorrow." Fleur said and then yawned.

"Well at least Veela's still yawn." Hermione joked. "I guess it is really late."

"Are you going to sleep with 'Arry tonight?" Fleur asked.

"Wh..What?" Hermione blushed.

"Sleep. Curl up in 'is arms and sleep." Fleur said. "Eet was very nice last night."

"But...I," Hermione stammered.

"Last chance before summer." Fleur reminded her. "If you're not, zen I am."

Hermione looked toward Harry's door her cheeks still red. "Well I..I guess."

Fleur smiled at Hermione. "Eet'll be fine and I'll see you in the morning." Then she strolled into her bedroom.

Hermione stared at Harry's door for a couple of minutes then she went her to own room changed into her nightgown, brushed her teeth and walked back out into the common room. Hesitating for just a moment, she walked over to Harry's door and opened it. Hesitating again for a few seconds, she steeled her nerves and strolled over and sat on his bed. She smiled as she looked at him in the moonlight coming through the window. His unruly hair was jutting out in a different directions and he had a smile on his lips. Hermione wondered if he was dreaming and if he was, could it be about her. After hesitating once more she slipped under the covers beside him facing the edge of the bed. His body heat beckoned her, and it wasn't long until she found herself against his body. At the contact, Harry rolled over and his arm draped over her. She was sure she must have awakened him, but his breathing stayed steady and she could feel him sleeping still in the bond. Hermione relaxed under his arm and a sense of peace and security fell over her. It wasn't long before she fell into a restful slumber with dreams she could only remember the next day as pleasurable.

I had meant a small chat to start the next chapter, but it just grew on me. I have too much planned for the next chapter so didn't want it to get too long. Hope you enjoyed this little one.

Chapter 1 – Purely a Recap of Books one through three. Nothing special is covered. Doesn't need to be read for the story.

Chapter 2 – Deal with Fleur's point of view from being selected until the start of the second task. She finds herself becoming fascinated by Harry Potter. She writes to her sister constantly because her sister has a crush on Harry Potter, The boy-who-lived.

Chapter 3 – Starts as they enter the water of the second tasks. Harry rescues Fleur from the Grindylows. Fleur's magic is compromised because of the water is interfering with her Veela magic. Harry swims with her to the hostages. As they are swimming toward the surface Gabrielle transforms and Grindylow attack again. Harry saves both Fleur's and Gabrielle's lives. They both name him bond mate. He falls unconscious. Awakes, talks to Dumbledore and find outs about the start of the bonding.

Chapter 4 – Harry meets Ron and Hermione. He gets angry at Ron for suggesting the Delacours are prizes. He confides in Hermione about the bonding. He meets with Sirius and Dumbledore in Dumbledore's office.

Chapter 5 – Back to the hospital wing. He talks to Madam Pomfrey. Dinner for Harry and the girls is planned. Hermione helps Harry get ready and we find out she likes him. Dinner between Harry and the Delacours goes very well. Girls explain how they fell in love with Harry. He tells them he will bond with them.

Chapter 6 – Harry goes for a morning walk with Gabrielle, on the return he meets Fleur and Gabrielle's parents. He has a discussion with Mr. Delacour and finds out more about the bond.

Chapter 7 - They attempt to bond. Bond scene is inside an imaginary house. Self doubt images appear in the form of the Dursley's. Bond is prevented from occurring. They call in an expert in Veela Bonds, Rachelle Berceau, and view memories of what occurred in the bond in Dumbledore's pensieve. The Veela Bond expert says they have to overcome Harry's self doubt. She explains there is a technique to push a trusted person into the bondimage if there is someone Harry trusted completely. They find out Hermione is in Harry's heart which the Veela expert interprets as Harry loves her. Dumbledore also discovers just how abused Harry has been at the Dursley's.

Chapter 8 – Hermione contemplation of her relationship with Harry over a late breakfast. She is taken to Dumbledore's office by Fawkes. Hermione is told of the problem with the bond, and she agrees to help if Harry wants her to. The Delacours and Hermione talk and Hermione learns Harry is in love with her and she confesses to the sisters that she loves him too, and hopes that isn't a problem if she wants to still be Harry's friend. Fleur and Gabrielle assure her that they would never try to prevent the friendship. Harry agrees to allow Hermione to help. They start the bond process again, this time with Hermione guiding the way. Harry's self doubts again try to overtake him, and when Hermione realizes he is about to fail again she kisses him and confesses her love for him. Hermione begs Harry to lose his doubt that people love him, that she loves him, and Fleur and Gabrielle love him. The self doubt images disappear and they make it to Harry's heart. Hermione says good bye and starts to walk away when Fleur and Gabrielle offer her a chance to join the bond. They tell her that since she is there with Veela magic, she will be bonded as well if she enters Harry's heart with them. After Harry says he could never envision a day without her in it she agrees and they all complete the bond. When they come out of bondimage, the noise of verbal echoes assault Harry and after separating the girls from Harry, Professor Berceau explains about the echoes and how the Veela magic will protect the bond mate's minds to Professor Dumbledore.

Chapter 9 – Starts off five days later with Harry contemplating how things had changed over the last few days. He mentally thinks about how the bond echoes have disappeared after a while and what the bond allowed him and his bond mates to do. Fleur and Gabrielle get to meet Sirius and the girls come up with a plan to not reveal the bond immediately but wait until the summer. Harry and each of his three bond mates share their first deeper kiss since the bond and the other girls realize they can feel the enjoyment of the kiss through the bond. Dinner with Fleur and Gabrielle's parents, where Harry learns Mr. Delacour is the Deputy Minister of Magic in France. Fleur offers to tell him about Sirius. Apolline Delacour remembers the struggles of the last few days from her point of view. They agree that Gabrielle will attend Hogwarts the next year to stay close to her bondmate.

Chapter 10 – Confrontation with Hermione's parents who are come to the castle under the misconception that Hermione is probably

pregnant. They are relieved to find out it isn't true. Harry and Hermione explain and demonstrate the bond they share, but the Grangers become more confrontational again when they discover that Harry is bonded to more than their daughter. They do resolve the issue. Harry gets a lesson on feminine monthly cycles from Mrs. Granger when Gabrielle has her first one and panics.

Chapter 11 – Harry awakens to find Fleur sleeping in the bed with him. Grangers are shown around Hogwarts, meeting with the people who know about the bond to tell them they aren't disclosing it until the summer. Gabrielle is sorted into Gryffindor after a discussion with the hat. Dumbledore suggests to Harry that the Dursley's might need a little revenge extracted on them Marauder style. Harry asks Sirius if he wants his issue looked into by Mr. Delacour. He agrees. Harry remembers the Marauder's map and the possibility of Moody finding Sirius, and they agree that Sirius can hide in the CoS.

Chapter 12 – They go to the Chamber of secrets. Dumbledore suggests Harry should be given the rights to the Basilisk. Hermione figures out she can review Harry's remembrance of opening the Chamber and do it herself. When the bond mates make it to the dinner party with both the Delacours and the Grangers they find the Delacours have mentioned the exploits that Hermione has undergone with Harry (but she hasn't told them for fear they would not let her continue at Hogwarts). After the Grangers leave, Fleur tells her father about Sirius who agrees to open the matter once the bond is formally announced. Harry and Gabrielle go to the Gryffindor tower where the Twins want to throw him a party and find out Ginny is jealous of Gabrielle. Gabrielle talks to Ginny about Harry while trying to be friends with her.

Chapter 13 – Fleur and Hermione share a sister bonding conversation. Hermione asks Fleur what does it mean to be a Veela and Fleur describes her various powers. The Allure, the beauty and the other form she takes. Hermione describes Harry's ability to shake off the imperious curse. Hermione discovers that she might have picked up some Veela attributes. The chapter ends with Hermione slipping into Harry's bed to sleep next to him at Fleur's suggestion.

When Harry awoke the next morning, he knew immediately who was lying against him. Even without his glasses he recognized the brown hair that was currently tickling his nose. The vanilla smell of her hair was as familiar of a scent as his own shampoo. He gently reached for and put on his glasses, and propping himself up on his elbow he looked down at the sleeping young woman beside him. He moved aside a few strands of hair that were covering her face, and became enchanted by the wondrous sight of Hermione sleeping. The gentle movement of her chest as she breathed, the small smile that rested on her lips, even the slight movement of her eyebrows and nose ever so often fascinated Harry. A smile encroached upon his lips as he wondered what it would be like to go back in time two weeks and tell that past self how his life was going to change. An internal snort overcame him as he tried to imagine describing to that emotional impoverished past self what the emotions felt inside the bond were like. Would that past self even be able to comprehend the love he had for the woman lying beside him at this moment? Or that Fleur, the Beauxbaton Champion who seemed on her own plateau had started having feeling for him, or fall in love with him? "Not likely." He thought. Harry felt Hermione shift in her sleep and he laid back down and put his arm back around her. It was a few more minutes before he felt her awakening.

"Good morning love." Harry gently thought.

"Good Morning Harry." Hermione replied as she reveled in the loved pouring from Harry over the bond. She smiled and snuggled deeper into her pillow. It took a few more seconds before she realized there was an arm around her and the previous night came back to her, her chat with Fleur and going to bed in...Harry's Bed?

Hermione turned over quickly and found herself looking into those gorgeous emerald green eyes. "Harry, I.." Hermione face turned red as her eyes widened.

Harry laid a finger on her lips and his own lips followed lightly brushing over hers. "You think I mind waking up beside you?" He whispered as his fingertips trailed over her cheek.

Hermione eyes closed as she mentally followed the fingers trailing across her face, savoring the feel of it. She finally opened them again and looked at Harry. "I...I liked sleeping next to you, but I don't want you to..." Her voice trailed off as Harry's lips met hers again.

"You don't want me to think you want to explore the issue your father discussed with me yesterday morning?" Harry asked as he continued to stare into Hermione's eyes.

Hermione nodded as she looked away, a blush crept into her face again.

"Don't worry love." Harry thought. "I know neither of us are anywhere close to being ready for that yet. I'm happy holding and kissing you and feeling the love we share."

"It's just that if you did ask, I'm not sure I could tell you no. Feeling your love for me and wanting you to be happy... " Hermione's thoughts trailed off as she looked back into his eyes.

Harry looked at Hermione, he could feel the nervousness that she was experiencing, "Then I won't ask, not for some time to come, and only after we talk about it first. You know you mean too much to me to ever want what you aren't absolutely sure you're willing and ready to give."

Hermione continued to be lost in his eyes, feeling her very soul falling into them. Without even feeling his emotions, she knew the sincerity that was behind those words. It was an eternity before conscious thoughts reentered her mind, and her over analytical mind kicked back in. "But it's more than that Harry." She finally said. "We all need to sit down and discuss this as a bond issue."

"Why?"

"Because it will affect all of us." Hermione explained. "You see how just a good kiss between you and one of us, affects the other two. We can feel the kiss. What happens when you and I or Fleur do go further sometime in the future?"

"The others will feel it." Harry sighed as he fell back into his pillow and stared at the ceiling. "Nothing is going to be simple in this relationship is it?"

Hermione smiled at him, "No it isn't, but then again, you're not a simple man are you?" She laid her head on his chest and listened to

his heartbeat. "I know you can feel my love, but I never want to forget to say just how much I love you Harry."

"I love you too."

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"Remus, Welcome." Albus Dumbledore said to the gaunt looking man in front of him. "I'm glad you were able to come so quickly."

"You mentioned it had something to do with Harry." Remus Lupin replied. "Is everything alright?"

"He's had a very interesting couple of weeks, but that is a tale he has to decide if he wants to share with you." Dumbledore replied. "But I think you will find he is looking forward to seeing you."

"Is this something to do with the Triwizard tournament?"

"You've been keeping track of it?"

"Only what I've read. How did Harry get entered into it?" Remus asked.

"Someone confunded the Goblet of Fire." Dumbledore replied. "Unfortunately when the last name comes out, the Goblet dissipates all residual magic, so we were unable to investigate the matter thoroughly. Alastor Moody looked into the matter, but wasn't able to discover any further evidence. All we know is it would take a powerful bit of magic to override the Goblet. Unfortunately the original creators of the cup never envisioned someone's name being put in the cup who didn't want to compete so the magical contract was less stringent than it should have been. Of course that will be corrected before the next tournament." The Headmaster looked thoughtful for a few moments, "I'm hoping the person responsible was just hoping Harry got hurt or humiliated in the tournament. If that's the case he has to be feeling pretty foolish right now." Dumbledore's eyes gained a slight twinkle, "Not only is Harry doing extremely well, he's actually tied for first in scoring." Dumbledore's eyes lost the twinkle as he continued, "Though I can't shake the feeling it's more than that. I guess the person could have thought Harry might get killed, but I believe we have enough safeguards to prevent any of the Champion's deaths. Well I did until we had an

unforeseen crisis in this last task. We almost had a Champion and participant die."

Lupin looked at the headmaster sharply. "The Prophet didn't mention that. It only mentioned the Beauxbaton Champion's hostage needed help getting to the platform. It wasn't Harry was it?"

"It wasn't Harry who almost died, except in risking his life to save the Beauxbaton Champion and her hostage, but that's part of the tale I'll let him tell you." Dumbledore said. "But I'm taking no chances in the third task. I have Alastor working on improving the security."

Remus studied the Headmaster. "Mad-eye was one of the best, but is he still up the task?"

"I think so." Dumbledore said. "Outside of a complaint from Lucius Malfoy about having his son transfigured into a ferret, Alastor's classes have been up to par this year. Severus has complained about him searching his office on several occasions already and he's voiced his reservations about Karkarov being here. But his lack of trust should work to our advantage when it comes to security."

"OK, but I will feel better when this year's over and Harry's finished with the tournament." Lupin replied.

"So will I Remus. Now I would like to discuss something else with you. When you were working with Harry last year, did he mention his life before Hogwarts?"

Remus thought back to the times he spent with Harry the previous year. The young man never seemed really happy but Lupin couldn't remember any exact reference Harry ever made to his home life. "No, I can't say he did."

"Well I won't go into details, but it hasn't been pleasant." The Hogwarts Headmaster explained. "I suggested to Harry, that maybe the remaining Marauders might like to utilize their unique methods in expressing their displeasure in the way Harry has been treated."

Remus looked at the Headmaster. "You asked me here to prank some muggles? Are you serious?"

"Remus, I asked you here to mitigate a serious misjudgment on my part." Dumbledore replied. "If Harry will tell you the complete story, both what happened before he got to this Castle, and what happened in the last two weeks, you will understand why I consider this important. The Dursley's actions not only were inexcusable for Harry's sake, but as you will find out, almost cost for more than that."

Remus considered the older Wizard's words before replying. "Was it really that bad for Harry?"

Dumbledore eyes took a look of extreme weariness, "I really would prefer Harry to give you the details, but I'm not sure if he will. But yes Remus, it was. For the life of me, I can't understand how someone related to Lily could be so different."

"Lily Evans Potter" Remus thought. The name brought back the hurt that came with her loss. James' death had hurt Remus tremendously, but he had been a man of action, who always had to be involved in what was going on, so in his heart Remus was always prepared for his loss in the war against Voldemort. But Lily, She was everything, beautiful, smart and had a heart of gold. She was one of the few people outside of the Marauders who figured out that Remus was a werewolf and it never bothered her for a minute. Lupin remembered the first time he has seen her holding little Harry. The smile she had on her face radiated so much love she almost glowed. Harry had been born just a couple of days after a full moon and Lupin had still been feeling pretty tired, but just that sight of Lily beaming down at her son had made all of the aches and pains disappear.

"You know I'd do anything to help Harry." Remus replied to the Headmaster. "I am currently unemployed so I can start immediately if you want me too. You mentioned Marauders; does that mean Sirius is around also? "

"Yes, Sirius has been in the castle for the last couple of weeks because of what happened to Harry." Dumbledore explained. "But last night Harry remembered that Alastor got something he called the Marauder's map from him and we had to get Sirius to a place of hiding. I presume from the name of the map, you are familiar with it?"

Remus thought of the map he had given Harry back last year and chuckled a little, "Yes, I'm very familiar with it. As you might have already guessed, I was one of the creators of it." Lupin appeared lost in thought for a few seconds before continuing. "I agree that Sirius needed to be hidden, but the good thing is unless Alastor had a reason to be looking for Sirius, he might not have seen him."

"Why would you say that?"

"The map shows the entire castle and most of the grounds." Lupin explained. "It shows the current position of everyone in those areas in current time including their movements. The map is an excellent tool when you want to avoid someone." Remus looked at Albus, "such as Filch or certain professors who might not have appreciated Marauder humor, but because there are so many dots, and they are constantly moving, unless you are specifically looking for a particular name, it's hard to pinpoint one. Now unless Moody had a reason to believe Sirius was in the castle, he would have had no reason to be looking for that name on the map. But then again with that Magical eye of his, no telling how it can be used to pick out details."

"Well that might explain why Alastor hasn't tried to apprehend Sirius." Dumbledore replied. "We have him tucked away somewhere very secure, that not even Alastor can get to or see on the map. As for you being unemployed, I think this could fall under a special assignment by the Headmaster of the school and I can offer you free lodging and free food as well as a small amount of Galleons to make it worth your while. I can also have Severus prepare Wolfsbane potion again and the place we have Sirius would be an excellent place for the full moon nights. I would definitely have something else to offer you if you knew anything about rendering magical creatures down to salvageable items, or I should say Harry would."

"I will admit to not knowing everything, but after so many odd jobs I've picked up a few skills here and there. Give me a book on the subject and a little time, I can probably do a passable job. What's Harry needing done?" Remus asked.

"Do you remember what Harry did in his second year?" Dumbledore asked.

"The Basilisk?" Remus asked as he instantly came to the correct conclusion. "But that was almost two years ago, surely it isn't still viable?"

"I assure you that it is." Dumbledore said. "I was just down in the Chamber of Secrets last evening. It's an impressive sight."

"Even so, why Harry?"

The Headmaster looked contemplative for few seconds then looking back up at Remus, "There are a few reasons I suggested he gets the rewards for that endeavor." Dumbledore sighed "Until you actually see that creature it's hard to image just what Harry faced down in that chamber. Look at that sword there," he nodded at the Sword of Gryffindor in a case on the wall. "When we go down to the Chamber later, I want you to imagine facing the thing you're going to see with just that in your hand. Then remember he was only twelve and didn't have his wand at the time."

"Go down to the Chamber?" Remus asked, and then it hit him. "So that's where you've tucked Sirius away."

"Yes it is." Dumbledore replied. "It might not be the best facilities in the world, but it's not very cold, it is very secure and we're sending down food for him. Harry and his uh...friends are planning on keeping him company."

"You said a few reasons for Harry getting the proceeds from the rendering of the Basilisk, what are the others."

"I would prefer the galleons not go to the Ministry where you know some of the people there will siphon the funds off to their personal gains." Dumbledore said. "You also know as well as I that some of the people there directly supported Voldemort, and with the spectacle at the World Cup, I am concerned they are going to start trying to start pushing their pureblood agenda overtly again. Money influences policies, so the more I can keep out of their hands, the better off we will be and I imagine this will be a significant amount." The Headmaster sighed again, "And finally some of the things that have happened in the last couple of weeks to Harry are going to make his life a little more complicated, having funds to draw from will help."

"And you're not going to tell me what these complicated things are, are you?" Remus asked.

"It is really Harry's and his friends' story. I probably shouldn't have even mentioned this much, but I think they will be glad to tell you."

"So Miss Granger and Mr. Weasley are a part of this?" Lupin asked.

"Oh you can definitely say Miss Granger is," Dumbledore said with a slight chuckle, "but not Mr. Weasley. My last understanding was the issue was not going to be discussed with him yet."

Remus thought of the trio of friends from the previous year but he knew how the dynamics of teenage friends can change and didn't pursue those questions. "Well as I said, I am definitely interested in helping. It will be good to see Padfoot again. I do have one last question though. You mentioned that Harry might need to have funds to draw from, has he already spent his inheritance? I know James and Lily weren't exceptionally rich, but they weren't poor either. I can't imagine Harry has used all of that money up."

"James and Lily died without wills Remus." Dumbledore said. "I have been keeping the inheritance tied up in the court system until Harry's seventeenth birthday."

"Why?"

"If he receives the inheritance before then without clear guidelines of trust, his guardians will have to be notified of and given access to the funds." Dumbledore said. "His aunt could even make a claim to part of the family money outright. It might even turn out to be a moot point since I don't even know how much is in their family vault. It is sealed until the inheritance is settled and you know how the Goblins are, if you don't have a right to a vault, you don't get in the vault. Right now Harry has access only to his vault that was set up for him at birth. Fortunately James made me a trustee on that vault or I would have had to let the inheritance go through." Professor Dumbledore looked like he was going to say something else but then changed his mind. "I guess I need to find out how his relationship with the Weasleys might change because of his new life. I need to see if he wishes Molly to still have access. Just one more thing that needs to be done."

"Does he even know about the family vault?" Remus asked.

"I want to tell him, but I remember him sitting in front of the Mirror of Erised night after night looking at himself with his parents." Dumbledore said sadness permeating his voice. "How much more sorrow will I bring to him, if I tell him that there may be mementos of his parents awaiting him in a vault, but he can't touch them for more than two years."

"He's not eleven anymore you know." Remus said.

"I know Remus, but when you get to my age, everyone looks too young." Dumbledore replied. "Maybe I should talk to him about it. But not for a while. Harry definitely is working through personal issues right now."

Remus shook his head, "I was positive that James and Lily wrote their wills. Sirius mentioned he was to be Harry's guardian in case...well what happened happened."

"They did file wills with the ministry." Dumbledore said, "But there were problems when the will were unsealed."

"You know more about the law than I do, so I'll let you take care of that issue."

The two men continued to discuss a variety of subjects for the next hour or so before they left to find Harry so Mooney could join Padfoot in the chamber.

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The initial entrance into the Great Hall was staged by the bond mates. Harry walked in first with Gabrielle holding tightly to his arm, gazing happily at him. Fleur was walking on the other side of Gabrielle. The murmurs and head turning started before the trio made it to the Gryffindor table. Gabrielle sat next to Harry while Fleur took a seat across from them. Once they were seated, Hermione came rushing in a couple of minutes later and sat down on the other side of Harry.

Ron got up from his seat next to Seamus Finnigan and was about to sit down next to Fleur until he realized who it was and quickly moved

around the table and sat next to Hermione. He was doing his best to not look at Fleur but trying to get Harry's attention. "Glad to have you back mate." He said finally.

"Good to be back Ron." Harry replied. "You met Gabrielle last night but maybe a new introduction to her sister might be in order? Fleur this is my friend Ron Weasley, Ron, Fleur Delacour."

"Nice to meet you Ron. I must apologize for ze way I treated you when asked me to ze Ball. I was upset with all the people asking me." Fleur said.

"Uh, yeah...that's ok." Ron replied as his face started turning red as he quickly turned back to Harry. "So Harry what are you doing today? Got time for a game of chess or exploding snaps?"

"Thanks Fleur, have I mentioned how beautiful you are today?" Harry thought, and then to Ron, "Probably not, I'm taking Gabrielle into Hogsmeade this morning, and I do believe Fleur and Hermione are joining us. Want to come along?"

Ron's eyes glanced at Fleur, "Uh..maybe next time. What about this afternoon?"

Harry noticed the eyes, and said, "Ron, you're going to have to get over this thing with Fleur. We've become good friends, and I'm dating her sister. I'm going to be spending a lot of time with her." He winked at his eldest bond mate when Ron looked away, "for some reason she doesn't think she can trust me with Gabrielle."

Fleur's silvery laughter ranged out "Oh 'Arry, you know I trust you. I trust zat as soon as I turn my back you'll be dragging my sister off into some broom closet." Then to her bond mate, "And you know I want to be the one you take in a broom closet."

"That's alright." Ron replied, and then he turned to Hermione. "What happened to you the last week?"

"I had a family emergency that I don't want to speak of right now." Hermione replied with her practiced response.

"Oh..well, I'm glad you're back, I mean I'm so far behind in my homework. Do you think you can help me today?" Ron asked.

Harry felt the annoyance buoy up in Hermione before she replied. "If you mean will I look over your work that you've completed, I'll be glad to. But if you're asking me to let you look at my homework so you can copy, then no I won't. We will be studying later this afternoon if you wish to join us though. We are still behind in our homework as well."

"Am I that bad love?" Harry asked mentally. "Do you get that annoyed with me?"

"Sometimes." Hermione replied truthfully. "But you're not as bad as Ron. You at least tried when I finally got you working."

"I'll try to be better, just don't expect me to keep your schedule please." Harry replied. "I doubt I've ever told you enough how much I appreciate all that you've done for me."

Hermione looked down at her plate as a simple blush came over her face, "I just wished I had done more. As for enticing you to do better, maybe Fleur, Gabrielle and I can come up with an appropriate reward system for you." Hermione suggested. "One that you might find very very enjoyable." And she flashed him a thought of them kissing.

"Yeah, I guess I better." Ron replied. "I..well just let me know when you're starting."

"We'll be glad.." Hermione started when another voice interrupted.

"What'd you do Potter, dump the mudblood and start on a Veela whore?" The unmistakable sneer of Draco Malfoy sounded. "What other kind of scum was there at the bottom of that lake?"

Harry's eyes went directly to each of his bond mates. He could feel the simple annoyance from Hermione over the bond, but could feel distress radiating from Gabrielle and anger from Fleur. Gabrielle looked up at Harry and he could see tears forming in her eyes.

"It's alright Gabrielle. He's just a an arrogant idiot." Harry thought soothingly, but felt his own anger rising as he turned to face the blonde Slytherin pulling his wand out as he did. He noticed not only

was Draco flanked by his two massive bodyguards, but Pansy Parkinson was also with him.

"Harry, DON'T!" Hermione shouted into his head.

"I have to Hermione." He replied, but he felt his anger diminishing as he heard Fleur, " 'E's not worth it 'Arry."

"Jealous aren't you ferret?" Harry replied evenly. "Wished your girlfriend," Harry's eyes flickered over to Parkinson, "was as beautiful as mine? Guess all of the inbreeding takes a toll on the looks."

Draco's face went red and he grabbed for his wand, but before it cleared his robes, there was another wand poking him in the back of the neck, "Are you sure you want to do that?" Came the voice of Cedric Diggory. "You do realize you have three Triwizard champions and most of Gryffindor table with wands ready don't you?"

"Plenario Katharsis" Harry heard Fleur mutter quietly as her wand wiggled slightly.

Draco glared at Harry one last time and turned to stalk away. Before they left, Parkinson tossed a copy of Witch Weekly onto the table and looked at Hermione. "You might find something interesting in there." She smirked and followed Draco.

"Are you alright Gabrielle?" Harry asked. "He's nothing."

"I'm alright 'Arry. Zank you." Gabrielle replied. "I shouldn't 'ave let it bother me."

"Zat boy" Harry felt the emphasis on the thought boy from Fleur, "Needs to learn a few manners. Zough pretty soon,'e's going to need a bathroom."

"What did you do?" Harry asked.

"Maman taught me a spell to deal wiz pureblood scum like 'im." Fleur said. "As she put it, it's better to 'ave dirty blood zan dirty underwear. Ze spell is an old bowel cleansing spell. It's used to be used by 'ealers who needed to diagnose digestive issues before ze bowel content banishing spell was developed. It delays about five

minutes before kicking in. Ze spell is designed zat way to give ze patient time to get to ze bathroom."

It took a lot of control for Harry not to burst out laughing right on the spot. "Oh Merlin I'm in trouble if I ever tick off my bond mates aren't I?"

"Of course love. But you're ignoring Cedric right now."

Hermione had picked up the magazine and started flipping through it, while Harry turned to Cedric. "Sorry about that Cedric, I was thinking about the look on Draco's face when you came up behind him. I appreciate the support there."

"Fleur's my friend also Harry and I figured the jerk was going to insult her or her sister." Cedric said.

"Oh have you met Gabrielle?" Harry asked.

"Actually I haven't, but I presume she's the beautiful young woman who is sitting beside you?"

Harry turned to Gabrielle, "Gabrielle Delacour, this is Cedric Diggory, He's the real Hogwart's Champion. Cedric, this is Gabrielle."

Cedric took her hand and gave it a kiss. "Nice to meet the young lady who's captured Harry's heart. I think you have broken many of witches' hearts this morning. Your sister spoke very highly of you all year. And ignore your boyfriend, Harry's proven he's worthy of being a Champion."

"Nice to meet you Cedric." She looked over at Harry. "I'm very lucky eet seems. 'Arry's a very special person."

"Well I'm glad you're all right Harry and especially glad you were there for Fleur and Gabrielle." Cedric said. "You did a great job .."

"That...that bitch!" Hermione sputtered. She had found an article in the magazine underneath a color photo of Harry. The rest of the group leaned over her to read.

Harry Potter's Secret Heartache

A boy like no other, perhaps - yet a boy suffering all the usual pangs of adolescence, writes Rita Skeeter. Deprived of love since the tragic demise of his parents, fourteen-year-old Harry Potter thought he had found solace in his steady girlfriend at Hogwarts, Muggle-born Hermione Granger. Little did he know that he would shortly be suffering yet another emotional blow in a life already littered with personal loss.

Miss Granger, a plain but ambitious girl, seems to have a taste for famous wizards that Harry alone cannot satisfy. Since the arrival at Hogwarts of Viktor Krum, Bulgarian Seeker and hero of the last World Quidditch Cup, Miss Granger has been toying with both boys' affections. Krum, who is openly smitten with the devious Miss Granger, has already invited her to visit him in Bulgaria over the summer holidays, and insists that he has "never felt this way about any other girl". However, it might not be Miss Granger's doubtful natural charms that have captured these unfortunate boys' interest.

"She's really ugly" says Pansy Parkinson, a pretty and vivacious fourth-year student, "but she'd be well up to making a Love Potion, she's quite brainy. I think that's how she's doing it."

Love Potions are, of course, banned at Hogwarts, and no doubt Albus Dumbledore will want to investigate these claims. In the meantime, Harry Potter's well-wishers must hope that, next time, he bestows his heart on a worthier candidate.

"I told you!" Ron hissed at Hermione as she stared down at the article. "I told you not to annoy Rita Skeeter! She's made you out to be some sort of- of scarlet woman!"

Hermione stopped looking angry and snorted with laughter. "Scarlet woman?" she repeated, shaking with suppressed giggles as she looked around at Ron.

"It's what my mum calls them," Ron muttered, his ears going red.

"Are you alright love?" Harry asked.

"Yes, just annoyed. You know this is only the example of what she's going to write when our bond comes out don't you?" Hermione replied. "But I want to know how she knew what Krum said to me. It

was right after he pulled me from the lake and before I started getting worried about you."

"She wasn't there?"

"No. Not unless she was under an invisibility cloak."

"Don't let it bother you."

"I shouldn't but I really wished there was a way to get back at her."

"I'm sure you'll think of something. Maybe Fleur will have an idea. Did you see what she did to Draco?"

"No.." Hermione started then catching the thoughts in Harry's mind
"She didn't?"

Harry and Hermione glanced over at the Slytherin table where Draco, Pansy and several other Slytherins were all holding up copies of the magazine looking at them in glee. As Harry stared at the Slytherins he saw a strange expression of pain and concentration appeared on Malfoy's face. The blonde ferret stood up and bolted for the Great Hall doors. As he paused to open the doors his last control was lost and a stream of brown liquid poured out of from under his robes.

By now everyone in the Great Hall had their attention on the blonde headed Slytherin, as he struggled out the doors. As his head disappeared from view, the Hall heard the unmistakable voice of Filch.

"FILTH..DISGUSTING FILTH EVERYWHERE. I'VE HAD ENOUGH.." The rest was lost as the doors closed but the laughter was ringing throughout the Hall.

"Fleur, that was great." Harry thought, but before he could do anything else an oily voice came from behind him.

"Potter, what did you do to Malfoy?" Snape hissed dangerously.

Harry turned and glared at the greasy haired potion's professor.
"Even though he called my friend a mudblood, my girlfriend and her

sister something worse and gloated over a highly liable article, I did not do anything to the Ferret."

"Ten points from Gryffindor and I think a detention is in order Potter for insulting a fellow student."

"Ten points? What about Malfoy? Are you going to punish him for insulting Hermione, Gabrielle and Fleur?"

"Malfoy is none of your concern Potter!" Snape replied as his lip curled, "Tuesday night at seven for your detention."

"But it is my concern Severus." Albus Dumbledore said as he and Remus Lupin had strolled up during the exchange between Harry and Professor Snape. "How will you be punishing young Mr. Malfoy?"

"Headmaster," Severus Snape started. "There is no proof outside of Potter and his friends that Malfoy insulted anyone."

Dumbledore looked at the students around him, "Do any of you disagree with Mr. Potter's allegations against Mr. Malfoy?"

"Sir, I followed Draco over here because I expected him to insult Fleur and her sister." Cedric said. "He first called Hermione a mudblood and made an extremely insulting remark about Veelas." Around the table all the heads were nodding in agreement.

"There you go Severus, the witnesses include a Hufflepuff and two French citizens." Dumbledore said. "So I think you assigned ten points for the insult by Mr. Potter, so in fairness that would be thirty points from Mr. Malfoy? And three detentions? I think those detentions can be served with Mr. Filch. Please inform him at your earliest opportunity."

"What about what Potter did to Mr. Malfoy?" Severus said. "He was staring at him when it happened. I know he did it."

"Oh, I'm sorry." The Headmaster turned to Harry. "Mr. Potter did you do anything to Mr. Malfoy in retaliation for the insults?"

Harry looked at the Headmaster. "Sir, I returned the insult by calling him a ferret, but I did not cast any spell upon Malfoy. You are more

than welcome to check my wand. As for why I was looking at him, I was glaring at him since he is propagating the libel article Rita Skeeter wrote in this magazine." He nodded at the magazine in front of Hermione. "The whole Slytherin table was laughing at us."

"Severus, will you take Mr. Potter's word, or will you need to check his wand?" Dumbledore asked.

Severus just glared at Harry and then turned and stalked away.

"I didn't mean to get you in trouble 'Arry."

"Are you kidding?" Harry thought. "You were brilliant, a three for one punishment for Malfoy and public humiliation. Don't worry about my punishment, I'm used to detentions with Snape."

"Now that that matter is settled Harry," Dumbledore said, "Remus is here to see you, and needs your assistance in getting him where he needs to be. He's going to be babysitting your dog for a while."

By now though, Harry was out of his seat, "It's good to see you again Professor Lupin." He said.

"I'm not your professor anymore Harry. I'm your godfather's and I hope your friend. I think Moony or Remus will be just fine." Lupin replied, and then he turned to the students surrounding Harry, "And that goes for all of you, though I don't think I have met you two." He said to Fleur and Gabrielle.

"Pro..Moony, I would like you to meet Gabrielle and Fleur Delacour." Harry said. "Fleur is the Beauxbaton's triwizard champion and Gabrielle is her sister and my girlfriend."

Remus eyes went from the Delacours to Harry immediately. "Girlfriend you say? Well I look forward to hearing all about the young woman. I now recognize the Fleur. Her picture was in the Daily Prophet along with yours about the tournament."

"But you know they left out the real Hogwart's champion, Cedric Diggory." Harry said, nodding to the older Hufflepuff.

"Yes." Lupin said and then turning to Cedric, "Congratulations, I understand you're doing quite well."

"Thank you sir, just trying to keep up with Harry." Cedric replied causing Harry to look down at his shoes.

"Harry." Professor Dumbledore started, "I have several things to take care of, can I trust you to get Remus to where he needs to go?"

"Yes sir, we were going to run into Hogsmeade right after breakfast, but we can delay that."

"Ah, speaking of Hogsmeade, could you postpone your trip until later in the afternoon perhaps, I have something I would like you to pick up for me." Dumbledore said. "It won't be available until around dinnertime though. If you wait to go toward late evening it would be highly helpful."

Harry looked at his bond mates, who all nodded. "Yes sir. We can do that."

"Excellent. Come see me before you leave then and I'll explain what I need you to do." Dumbledore said and turned and strolled up to the head table.

"Harry, you know you're going to have to tell Professor Lupin about us don't you?" Hermione thought. "He's going to the Chamber and he will need to know why Fleur and Gabrielle know about Sirius."

"Fleur, Gabrielle, Hermione just pointed out that Lupin will need to know about us, since he will be down in the Chamber with Sirius and will be inquisitive on why you know of him." Harry said.

"OK 'Arry." Fleur answered. "e was part of the zing with Sirius wasn't 'e?"

"Yes." Harry replied. "He was also our Defense teacher last year, and a good friend of my father and Sirius."

"Ron," Harry said, turning back to his friend. "After breakfast I need to take care of something for Moony. Are you up to studying with us later, maybe right after lunch, and that means if Fleur wishes to join us she will be there."

"Yeah...maybe." Ron replied and with a sullen look, got up from the table and started walking away.

"I guess I need to go talk to him." Harry said to the women around him.

Hermione put her hand on his arm. "Not yet. Let him think about it for a while. See what he decides before you talk to him."

Harry looked at her, then nodded and sat back down and finished breakfast.

Twenty minutes later they were all walking into Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. Remus had been puzzled when Fleur and Gabrielle joined them, but accepted Harry's promise that everything was alright.

"Oh 'arry, I want to try it zis time." Fleur said.

"You sure?" Harry asked.

"Yes, ze more of us who can do it, ze better." She said.

Harry concentrated on remembering opening the chamber, as Fleur concentrated. After a few seconds of thinking Fleur said "\$Open\$", that is what Harry heard at least. The rest only heard her hissing.

As the section of wall sunk out of sight, Lupin stared at Fleur, "You're a parseltongue?"

Fleur smiled, "Non. I just 'ave an excellent teacher." As she looked over at Harry. "My teacher is very 'andsome as well."

"But I didn't think parseltongue could be taught." Remus responded.

"It can't." Harry replied and then smiled at his old Professor's confused look. "Moony, lets head downstairs and if you can promise to keep a secret, we'll tell you what's going on."

"Harry, I hope you know you can trust me without even asking." Remus replied. "Just don't tell me anything that would put me in conflict with Sirius or in a position where I can't protect you."

Harry looked at the man in front of him and nodded before started down the steps.

Remus studied James' son. Harry seemed to be happier and more open than he was last year. "Maybe it was the dementors last year, but it still seems like there is something more." Remus lit his wand and followed up in the rear once all the ladies had followed Harry. A few minutes later they were at the entrance to the Chamber.

"Do you want to try Gabrielle?" Harry asked and again smiled at the look of confusion on Lupin's face.

"Non, 'Arry, anozer time I will." She replied.

Harry pulled her into a hug. "Are you ok?"

"I'll be fine." Gabrielle replied. She looked up at Harry and then gave him a peck on the lips. "Zank you."

"Anything for you." He replied.

Harry turned and looking at the emerald eyed snakes that protected the Chamber and hissed "§Open §."

As they entered they found Sirius had conjured himself a bed near the entrance and was still sleeping.

"I presume this Chamber is soundproof?" Remus whispered.

"Oh definitely." Harry replied guessing what was going to happen.

Remus pointed his wand at his throat and whispered "Sonorus." He winked at the others and mimicked putting their fingers in their ears. The he walked over to the sleeping Padfoot and with his magically magnified voice he gave a howl.

Sirius leapt from the bed looking in every direction at once as he clambered for his wand. Remus turned his wand back on himself and a loudly whispered "Quietus" and his voice was back to normal.

"You mangy werewolf." Sirius snarled. "I had a nice dream going of being pampered by....." his voice trailed off as he saw Harry and his bond mates laughing.

"Glad you're settling in Sirius." Harry finally said. "Shall we change the name from Chamber of Secrets, to Sirius's Slumber house?"

"Very funny pup." Sirius replied and turning back to his old friend and giving him a hug. "How've you been Moony."

Remus didn't reply because he had finally realized what the giant wall of poisonous green that was on the other side of the Chamber was. Dumbledore's words came back to him, "I want you to imagine facing the thing you're going to see with just that in your hand. Then remember he was only twelve and didn't have his wand at the time." Remus stumbled over to the Basilisk and just stared at it.

Sirius walked over to his friend, "I wouldn't want to face it. Give me Moody, two aurors and a couple of dementors anytime over fighting one of those."

"True." Lupin agreed, "But what about the Basilisk or Lily after James' Bachelor's party?"

"With the hangovers we had?" Sirius replied remembering that morning well. "Basilisk would have been much much quieter."

Remus turned back to Harry and saw all three young women had moved much closer to Harry. "I guess everyone has already told you how impressive this was, so I won't bother repeating words already spoken. Are you alright being down here?"

He watched Harry's eyes flicker to the Basilisk and around the Chamber. Harry finally said, "I'm fine."

"So can you tell me your secret now?"

Harry looked at his three bond mates, and then turned back to Remus. "It's only going to be a secret until the summer." He nodded to the table and chairs that were still there from the previous evening. "Have a seat."

Remus stared at the chair and then over at Sirius who had a blank expression on his face but the old twinkle was in his eyes. Not as bright as it had been in school, but much better than the almost dead eyes Sirius had the previous year, "Good to see that coming

back. I'm glad Azkaban hadn't driven it completely out of him." He thought. Remus strolled over and sat down and he looked up at the young gentleman still standing there.

"I feel like I'm telling my own father this time." Harry thought, and then to Remus. "Shall I start this off by giving my old Defense teacher a quiz? Moony, looking at Gabrielle and Fleur, what can you tell me about them?"

Remus looked at the two young ladies, "Both are extremely beautiful, silvery blonde hair, perfect complexion and carry themselves with exceptional grace. I would be very surprised to find they did not have some Veela in their parentage."

Harry turned to Hermione, "Shall we give him an O?"

"Most definitely Harry." Hermione replied. "He was our best Defense teacher."

Harry turned back to Remus who was smiling, "Their Grandmother is Veela." Then to Fleur and Gabrielle, "Am I going to like your Grandmother?"

"As long as you don't get 'er angry you will." Fleur replied then seeing the expression change on Harry's face. "Don't worry, she'll love you."

"Do you mind me quizzing Remus like this?"

"No, of course not. It is zat part of us zat you are explaining."

Remus was trying to remember all the customs and powers of a Veela that might be at the bottom of this secret that his friend's son held, but he couldn't think of any. Harry was obviously not under the influence of their allure.

"Next question then, what unique custom can the Veela employ when it comes to love?" Harry asked.

Remus again delved into sparse knowledge the sixth year textbook they had used imparted and nothing came to mind about Veelas and love. "I don't know Harry, I covered Veelas in the sixth year class but

the textbook didn't give much information since they are mostly on the continent."

Harry looked at Hermione "Well that explains why I didn't hear of them until the World Cup. We hadn't covered them yet." Then back to Remus, "Ok, I'll stop with the questions. Moony, Veelas can initiate a bond between themselves and a chosen person made of love." Harry wrapped his arms around Gabrielle's waist. "Their term for this is naming their bondmate. If accepted, the bond creates a permanent magical connection between the Veela and their chosen bondmate."

Remus looked at Harry and Gabrielle. "So you're Gabrielle's bondmate?"

Gabrielle turned around and putting her arms around Harry the two of them kissed. Harry's eyes finally left hers and he looked over at Remus, "Yes. I am Gabrielle's Bondmate." Then Harry walked over to Fleur and stared into her eyes.

"You tease." Fleur thought through a smile. Their lips came together and they enjoyed a few seconds of a kiss. Looking back at Remus once it ended, "And Fleur is my bond mate as well."

Remus's jaw was opening and closing as he tried to figure out what to say. Finally after a few attempts, "Both?" was all that materialized.

Sirius was enjoying the look on his friend's face, but he knew the jaw was going to hit the floor soon.

Finally Remus regained his voice. "Dumbledore mentioned you had saved the Beauxbaton Champion and her hostage's lives, is that what led too..." the sentence was left hanging as a question.

"It's not a life debt Remus, it is a bond of love."

"I'm sorry, I wasn't implying anything. I'm just not familiar with this bond." Remus said. "If you're happy with it Harry, of course I'm happy for you."

Harry was about to reply, when Remus performed a perfect lead in. Moony had turned to Hermione, "You know I would have sworn you

and Harry would get together someday. The way you always looked out for each other."

Hermione grinned, "Well you never know how things will turn out do you?" She walked over to Harry who was still standing next to Fleur. She looked at her older bond sister. "Do you mind if I borrow Harry for a minute?"

"Oh please do, 'Ermione." Fleur said smiling.

Remus's jaw dropped and had no chance of recovering anytime in the near future when Hermione and Harry engaged in a kiss similar to the first deep kiss they had shared. It was many seconds later when the two of them finally parted. Harry looked over at the Marauder. "Oh Moony, I think you're familiar with Hermione, my last bond mate."

Sirius couldn't contain his laughter at the look of his old friend's face. Finally the werewolf looked up and smiled. "Ok you got me. That was a good joke."

"Sirius is only laughing at the look on your face Remus," Harry said. "It's no joke. I am the bond mate of all three of these ladies. They are my family."

"How...I mean...well...Hermione isn't Veela is she? I thought she was muggleborn."

Harry and the three ladies launched into a description of what happened in the second task and all that led up to the bonding and how Hermione had joined. Harry was even willing to describe some of the things the Dursley's did to Harry.

"You were correct Prof..Remus." Hermione said. "Harry and I have always looked out for each other, and now we will all look out for each other. Fleur and Gabrielle are my sisters."

They explained to Remus their reason for wanting to keep the bond secret, and who currently knew about it and the discussions continued until Remus hit on the last thing.

"How did Fleur open the Chamber upstairs?" He asked Harry. "You agreed that parseltongue could not be taught, but she said you were her teacher."

Harry smiled at Fleur, "You want to explain this one?"

Fleur nodded and started "Ze Veela bond is a connection of ze 'eart and ze minds." She explained. "We can feel 'Arry's emotions and 'ear or understand what 'e is zinking."

"You can read each others minds?" Remus asked sitting up quickly.

"Thoughts." Harry answered. "I can't pull a memory from her without her thinking about it."

"And emotions." Fleur said. "I know if 'Arry is sad or 'appy. But we found out if 'Arry thinks about doing something, we can feel the memory, experience it even. So 'Arry remembers opening the Chamber and we can feel exactly what he did and duplicate it."

"So you can learn parseltongue?" Remus said.

"We can only duplicate ze sounds and actions. To us we are still 'issing and really not understanding what we are saying." Fleur explained. "We can't talk to snakes but we can open the Chamber."

"We better get back upstairs now." Harry said. "It's probably about lunchtime and I want to see about Ron."

Sirius put his arm around his old friend. "Are you planning on sharing my humble abode?"

"Yes, I guess I can keep you company."

"Well make sure you conjure yourself a chamberpot, there's no bathroom down here."

"What have you been doing?" Remus asked.

"Well it's a lot easier to use the bathroom as a dog and then banish it later." Sirius said. "Besides it's a unique kind of fun to hike up your

leg and piss on old Salazar over there." And he pointed at the statute of the fourth founder who had created the Chamber.

At that everyone started laughing.

Chapter 16

As Harry and his bond mates started to head out of the Chamber, Sirius called out. "Are you coming back later?"

"Yes, we are planning on studying down here unless you don't want us too?" Hermione answered.

"Oh you're more than welcome anytime. But can you bring me a supply of Quills and parchment? I told Albus I would map out the Chamber."

"Sure. Anything else you need?"

"Books would be nice. Something to do." Sirius replied and then with a grin, "A couple of scantily clad nurses with a week's supply of Fire Whiskey would also work."

One of Hermione's eyebrow rose but she grinned. "That might be a little more difficult, but we can see if any of Hagrid's Skrewts are available. They're hot and loads of fun."

Sirius had heard the students talk about the Skrewts in the Great Hall. "Uh, thanks but maybe another time."

Remus looked confused, "What's a Skrewt?"

"The correct name is Blast Ended Skrewt." Hermione explained. "Rita Skeeter wrote about them in her article about Hagrid after the Ball. Seems Hagrid mixed some Manticores and Firecrabs and created something he calls interesting. Currently they are about six feet long and growing with armored shells, poisonous stingers and moves by explosive propulsion. We've enjoyed their company this year in care of magical creatures."

Remus paled at the thought of what she described. "They sound, uh..interesting."

"Trust me when I say if I don't ever see another one, it will be too soon." Harry said.

"Harry, before you go, I should ask. Do you know why I'm here?" Remus asked.

"Dursley's? Professor Dumbledore mentioned he had asked you to come." Harry replied.

"How do you feel about it?"

Harry looked his old Professor in the eyes, "That question is hard to answer Moony. In the last two weeks my perspective on a lot of things has changed." Harry wrapped his arms around Gabrielle and pulled her a little closer to him, and smiled at Fleur. "What they did to me, almost cost two very special women their futures, but it also gave me the love of a third special woman." His eyes turned to Hermione and he smiled at her then he returned his gaze back to Lupin. "But there is no excuse for treating me as they did, so would I like for their lives to be uncomfortable, yes. Do I want them hurt? Not really, at least not seriously." Harry grinned, "When I left their house this year, Fred and George Weasley pranked my cousin with a piece of candy that caused his tongue to grow several feet, I still chuckle at that thought."

Remus nodded and turned to Sirius, "I think we can manage something that they will remember."

"I think you're right Moony, I think you're right." Sirius agreed with a smile.

"You might even want to talk to the twins; they've invented some really cool stuff." Harry explained. "They have a new candy when you eat it and it turns you into a Canary for a short time and then you turn back. The two of them are geniuses when it comes to inventing stuff."

"We weren't so bad ourselves in the days." Moony replied. "The map you seem to have trouble holding onto is a prime example."

That caused Harry to look down "Yeah and when I get it back I'm locking it away. Each time I've let it out of my hands, Sirius has been put into jeopardy. Last year if I'd kept it safe, Snape wouldn't have known we were in the Shrieking shack and this year I let Moody have it."

"Not your fault pup." Sirius replied.

"Last year was my fault Harry." Remus said and turning to Sirius, "I do regret that Padfoot. If I hadn't left the map out..."

"Moony, I'm not going to let you go there either. " Sirius said, "If Snivelous can't figure out how to get over a grudge, it's not your fault." Sirius looked back to Harry "But you can do what we did to protect that map when you get it back. We had a hidden pocket in our robes and kept an identical looking blank parchment in our regular pocket. If Filch or a Professor became curious about us looking at a piece of parchment, we just handed over the blank one."

"How did Filch end up with it then?"

"The rat." Sirius snarled as he looked at Remus. "The useless excuse for a wizard wanted to go to the kitchens for food after curfew. James let him take the map, and he forgot about the secret passageway on the second floor. Once he was passed Filch he wiped the map and didn't bother checking it again. Filch had heard his footsteps and cut him off. Idiot didn't even bother putting the map in his hidden pocket."

"No reason to dwell on Wormtail." Remus said, then turning to Harry. "So we have some imagination ourselves, but maybe I'll talk to the twins. What can I tell them about what we want to do?"

"They know some of it, they were there rescuing me when Uncle Vernon put the bars on my windows before my second year, and like I said they've already pranked them." Harry replied. "I doubt you would have to explain it much further than that."

"Excellent Harry, now I would like to mention one other thing. Please don't take this as I'm asking for special consideration or anything, but Albus mentioned he thought you should have the basilisk carcass."

"Yeah," Harry replied looking over at the thing in question. "He was going to talk to someone about selling it."

"Well there are two parts of actually dealing with it Harry." Remus explained, "Before it can be sold it must be rendered down to usable products, blood and venom collected and such. And once you have that, you can then sell those items."

"I don't know anything about any of that." Harry said. "I wouldn't even know where to start."

"Well that's where Albus thought I could help. I'm not a professional at rendering things down but I could probably do a decent job. I've had so many odd jobs, that it's become second nature to pick up new skills quickly." Remus said. "But if you prefer to get a professional, I definitely would understand."

"Oh, be my guest." Harry said shrugging his shoulders, "And take whatever you think is fair for compensation."

"Non!" Fleur said rather loudly causing Harry and Remus to turn to her, " 'Arry, Remus is your friend, 'e will take a lot less zan what is fair if you just say zat." Then to Harry she asks, "Love may I 'andle zis?"

"Of course."

Fleur turned back to Remus, " 'Arry will pay you eighty percent of ze going rate for taking care of ze Basilisk."

"Why not the full rate?" Harry asked.

"Because 'e will zen feel like 'e is taking advantage of you and not 'ave earned ze galleons." Fleur explained. "And if 'e feels guilty, it might lead to problems between you two later."

Remus looked quizzically, and then smiled at the older Delacour, "Very good analysis, especially since you don't really know me, Miss Delacour. Where did you learn your people skills?"

Fleur shrugged, " 'Aving a father who is in politics and working in 'is office 'as allowed me to learn something of people. My 'eritage also helps."

"Would I be rude is asking what your father does?"

Sirius slapped his arm around his friend, "Moony my friend, you are looking at the two daughters of the Deputy Minister of Magic of France."

"Alian Delacour is your father?" Remus gasped.

"You know of 'im?" Fleur asked.

"He got several laws that impeded on werewolf rights repealed two years ago." Remus explained. "He's well regarded amongst my kind."

"When you're married to a 'alf Veela, you're not going to 'ave many blood issues. Not if you want to survive your mother-in-law." Fleur explained smiling. "Papa is a fair man. 'E's going to be 'ere for ze zird task, I can introduce you to 'im if you would like?"

"I would like that, thank you. And I'll make sure he knows he has an exceptionally intelligent daughter." Remus acknowledged. "So back to our agreement, you know it should be less, but I'll take eighty percent of the current rate. I'll need to buy a book or two on the subject and some things like special gloves to handle the venom." He sent a challenging look at Harry, "Which will be at my expense."

"You can haggle with Fleur later about that stuff Remus." Harry said. "But we do need to get back upstairs."

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While Harry and Hermione went in search of Ron, Fleur and Gabrielle thought it would be best to take the time to go see Madam Maxine.

When they found him in the Gryffindor Common room, Harry and Hermione sat down in chairs on either side of Ron's. Harry turned to best friend and he saw him gazing back with a look Harry didn't recognize. "OK Ron, what's going on?" Harry finally asked.

"What's going on with me?" Ron replied, "What's going on with you, mate? I mean you been gone for two weeks and show back with two Veelas, and not going anywhere without them?"

Harry looked curiously at Ron, "Are you implying something, or are you having trouble accepting the fact I have a girlfriend and someone else to spend time with?"

Ron's voice dropped to a whisper as he looked around, "Are you sure the Veela didn't do anything to you? I mean Ginny was saying

your girlfriend told her she was in love with you. You're not really in love with a Veela are you? You know how they are."

Harry felt his anger grow, and over the bond both Fleur and Gabrielle felt it, "What is it love?" Fleur's beautiful voice asked.

"Just my friend insulting you two." Harry replied. "Trying to calm down before I do something he regrets." He looked into Ron's eyes and through gritted teeth he asked, "Exactly what do you mean when you say how they are?"

Ron lowered the volume of his voice even further "You know, they enchant men and put them under their spells. Mum says they play around with their, you know feelings, get whatever they want and then leave them."

Harry heard the simultaneous snort from two mental sources and one physical one as Hermione had moved closer to listen to Ron's words. "Ron do you actually believe everything your mother says?" Hermione asked. "I mean really, play around with men's feelings?"

"Just because you don't believe it doesn't mean it's not true." Ron snapped at Hermione and Harry felt the pure annoyance flow from Hermione. "Idiot." Harry looked up at his bond mate. "How many times do I earn that thought?"

"Sometimes, but again not nearly as often as he does." She mentally sighed. "If he would learn to think before speaking, but I guess he wouldn't be Ron then would he."

Ron had turned back to Harry. "Look mate, I thought you knew and that's why you were so depressed when you told us they were in love with you. I should have known then that something was wrong, but look, I didn't think, well I didn't think they could get to you. Guess I should have known when you got mad at me. How about I walk you down to see Madam Pomfrey and let her take a look at you?"

Harry was torn between laughing at his friend or hitting him for insult Fleur and Gabrielle's heritage. Harry finally started laughing because he knew at that moment, Fleur was restraining Gabrielle to keep her from coming to the Gryffindor Common room and showing Ron as her words put it, "Exactly what a pissed off Veela was famous for."

"Gabrielle it's ok. He's not worth it." Harry said. "I'll see you in a while." Then turning and smiling at his friend, "Look Ron, I'm fine. Gabrielle is not playing around with my feelings. As for as going to see Madam Pomfrey, who's care have I been under for the last two weeks?"

"Oh yeah, but that doesn't mean she didn't miss whatever they did to you. Maybe we can get Dumbledore to let you go to St. Mungos."

"Where?" Harry asked then remembered Fudge mentioning it to Mr. Weasley at the World Cup. "Oh that Hospital place? Ron I'm fine and don't need to go to Madam Pomfrey or the hospital."

"Ron, before you put another foot in your mouth, maybe you might want to open a book and learn something instead of spouting whatever your mother might have said." Hermione said angrily. "I have spent the last we..uh..day with Fleur and Gabrielle and both of them are very nice, very personable and I know that Gabrielle cares for Harry a great deal."

"Fine." Ron hissed loudly. "I tried, alright, I tried to warn you." He turned and stomped up the steps.

Harry put his head in his hands and sighed. "How do I get through to him, without mentioning the bond?"

Hermione moved over to the chair Ron had vacated and put her arm around Harry. "I don't know, but mentioning the bond would only make it worse. He would claim he's right and the next thing you'd hear is a Howler from Mrs. Weasley. Then it would be in the Daily Prophet the next day. "

Harry imagined the red envelope descending and landing in front of him in the Great Hall. The magically enhanced voice of Molly Weasley extolling whatever crap she spewed to Ron about Veelas to everyone in the Hall. "No, that will not happen." Harry thought. "But I'm going up and give it one more go with him.

A minute later Harry was in his dorm room looking at the back of his friend, who was lying on his bed facing away. "Look Ron." Harry started, "I appreciate your concern. I really do. But I know there is nothing wrong with me. If you really have a problem with Gabrielle or

Fleur because of their heritage, then I'm sorry, but we have a serious problem. Gabrielle is very special to me as is her sister. Trust me when I say that as much as I value your friendship, don't make me choose between them and you since you probably won't like the outcome." With those words, Harry turned and started out of the room, as he opened the door, he turned back to Ron, "We will be studying immediately after lunch, if you want to join us, then you'll need to find us before then." He turned and left the room.

"I'm sorry mon amour." Gabrielle said. Harry already knew she was headed toward the Gryffindor Common room.

Harry could feel the sadness from both of the Delacours, while it was more of annoyance from Hermione who had dealt with Ron to many times. "Don't worry. As I told him, there is no real choice here. My life is with all of you. I'm hoping he'll get over it."

"Even if he does Harry, will it happen again this summer?" Hermione asked.

"Probably." Harry conceded with a sigh as he sat back down heavily in the chair in the common room. Gabrielle arrived and promptly put herself in Harry's lap and started kissing him to cheer him up.

"I can't wait to get back into the Chamber so I can do that." Hermione let him know; he couldn't help but feel better with the love of three women pouring into him.

A short time later they were back in the Great Hall eating lunch. Harry kept looking over each time the door opened to see if it was Ron, but he never showed up. When lunch was over, the four of them made their way back to the Chamber of Secrets. Hermione gave Sirius some of her Quills and parchment, knowing she could replace them in Hogsmeade later in the day. Fleur gave him French language lessons books, saying, "When your name is cleared, my parents will expect you to visit as often as you like. Zese will 'elp you."

Sirius looked at Gabrielle, "Nothing from you? I'm hurt." He smiled at her to let her know it was in jest.

"Well if you like I can have Papa or Maman send my 'arry Potter book collection." Gabrielle replied and looking over at her bond mate she continued. "Ze real zing is much better zan any book."

Harry blushed and then muttered, "How about we just tell them to throw them out."

"Non." Then her beautiful blue eyes got a mischievous glint in them, "But I can give zem to the 'Ogwart's library so everyone can read zem."

Harry gave a fake glare at her because he could tell she wasn't serious about it.

"Before we start studying can we try to see if we can learn spells like we learned to open ze Chamber?" Fleur asked. "I really want to see what my Patronus is."

Hermione looked at them with a smile, "Patronus?"

Harry looked at all three young women, "Fine by me, especially since I have the person who taught me right here to help." He looked over at Lupin who smiled. "Ok, you need to find your happiest memory since I doubt you can use mine."

Each of the three ladies started concentrating, Harry first started to try to see their happiest memories but with the three of them thinking about and discarding various memories he finally had to stop trying. Fleur finally looked over at Lupin, "Sir, at Beauxbaton we were taught it is more of ze emotion zan ze memory zat drives ze Patronus."

"Remus please or Moony, and yes your instructor was correct in that mostly, but it is not only the emotion but the ability to focus that emotion. A memory seems to be the best way to focus on the emotion to start with." Remus replied and then continued. "Eventually, for the Patronus to be an instinctive charm, you will need to tap the emotion and focus directly without stopping for a trigger."

"So anything that can result in the positive emotion that can be concentrated on would work. A memory, or even something

imagined, say something you're looking forward to, as long as it helps focus on positive emotions." Fleur asked.

"It should," Remus concurred. "Again the stronger the positive emotion the better."

Harry pulled out his wand and this time he knew which memory he wanted since it was very fresh in his mind, he thought of this morning, watching Hermione sleep, the love he felt for her, and "EXPECTO PATRONUM."

A silver stag shot out of Harry's wand. Everyone gasped, even those who had seen a similar casting in Harry's memories. This stag was even more impressive. A brightness that almost hurt their eyes surrounded an animal that anyone would swear was solid. The stag wandered around the Chamber for a few seconds, stopping and gazing at each of the bond mates before it finally disappeared.

Each of the bond mates who experienced the casting could feel the pure raw emotions that had poured into the Patronus charm. Hermione had first blushed as she saw herself sleeping in his memory but the love that had swept into that memory was overwhelming, she had felt the love focus, and when the charm had been cast, she felt the energy sharpen even further and it seemed to constantly stream out until the Patronus disappeared.

Fleur and Gabrielle had experienced the same scene and feelings from their bond mate casting the charm, though lost in the experience was Fleur noticing something that had made her smile even larger. She suppressed the thought. If Harry noticed it, she was more than willing to talk to him about it, but she would prefer for him to not even think about it yet. She had seen hidden in the swirl of love Harry had for Hermione, was the flicker of love he had now developed for her and her sister. Just as Harry's love for Hermione flowed over all of their bonds, and Fleur and Gabrielle enjoyed it, this love was there as well. And to Fleur to know that her bond mate had started to love them so soon was an incredible feeling.

Sirius was the first to speak, "Wow pup that was some Patronus. So that's what saved my soul?"

"Looked just like Prongs didn't it Padfoot?" Moony asked still in awe himself.

"It did indeed, well except the excruciating bright light, if James had glowed like that we would've probably been noticed."

"That was fascinating." Hermione said with her eyes aglow. "I want to try it now."

It wasn't quite the same as opening the Chamber, but it was close. Nothing happened on her first try, but on her second try she got a white mist. Finally on Hermione's third try she ended up changing her memory to the one of her sharing Harry's memory of looking at her while she slept. Her own feeling of love witnessing his love for her brought forth a bright silvery otter which gamboled about before disappearing.

"Eet was beautiful 'Ermione." Gabrielle said as he hugged her bond sister who was looking a little exhausted.

"You get use to it eventually." Harry told her as he gave her his own hug.

"I just hope I don't have to fight Dementors anytime soon." She replied as she sat down on a chair. "But I guess I better practice it."

Fleur, who had already done the charm before but had only gotten a faint white mist, thought of the difference between what she had done before and what Harry did. It was the depth and intensity of the emotions she determined. She realized that all the effort she had put into controlling her Veela temper was actually detrimental in her previous attempts at this charm. That and not having felt love as she felt for the raven haired young man who was looking at her with those eyes of his. She locked her eyes to his, daring, even inviting him to share what she was going to think about to bring her positive emotions forth. There was a bluff on her family property that overlooked the Mediterranean Sea. It rose thirty meters above the sandy beaches below. It was a place Fleur had found herself on many occasions sitting and staring out over the water in her childhood, watching the birds of the sea glide on the breezes. Her thoughts now were not from a past though, but of a future she hoped to have come true someday. Fleur felt the happiness and the love from that thought surge through her and as she casts "EXPECTO PATRONUM" from the tip of her wand a silver Osprey emerged. It circled the cavern and descended. Just as it was close to the group

it disappeared. Harry looked searchingly at Fleur who returned a smile that he knew was only for him and he heard "Beautiful wasn't it?" and he wholeheartedly agreed.

Gabrielle couldn't get past the white mist while attempting the cast the charm. Harry had to comfort her when she was too drained to try again. He reminded her that until today Fleur hadn't got past that part either. Remus guessed that she didn't quite have the mental discipline yet to push out the needed emotions. "Keep trying." He told her. "Change memories if you don't feel a rush of positive emotions in your memory."

They finally got settled and completed as much homework as they could until it was three in the afternoon. Realizing it was time to head into Hogsmeade they bid the two Marauders a good day and made their way to the Headmaster's office.

"We were just headed into Hogsmeade. You wanted to ask us to get something for you while we are there?" Harry asked when they were all settled in front of Professor Dumbledore's desk.

"Yes, The new moon was just a few days ago and it's going to be getting brighter and brighter for the rest of the month, and I need something brought to the castle in as much darkness as possible." Dumbledore explained.

"If it needs to be hidden, I can take my cloak." Harry said.

"This item is too big for your cloak, but you have had experience in moving it before." The Headmaster said with a twinkle in his eyes.

Hermione's eyes lifted to look at Professor Dumbledore, "You're not serious."

"No, but to go along with his pun, it is something you gave Sirius last year. I need you four to use your special talents to get a Hippogriff into Hogwarts tonight."

Harry looked at Hermione and then back at Dumbledore, "You're kidding right?"

"I am not joking. Buckbeak is currently in a cave just out of Hogsmeade. Sirius was going up every couple of days feeding and

spending a little time with him. Unfortunately he can't do that now. Buckbeak is tethered in the cave so he can't get food by himself."

"And what are we going to do with him once we get him here?"

"Get him into the Chamber with Remus and Sirius. It's a lot bigger than the cave and he'll be able to stretch his wings."

"So do you have a plan for us, or do we just...uh...wing it?" Harry asked.

"I have a suggestion, but if you need to change something feel free too. As you know Hagrid exercises Madam Maxine's horses frequently so I don't think anyone will think it's strange to see a flying animal as long as it's dark and they can't see exactly what it is. I suggest you spread out and use your unique ability to communicate to make sure the path is clear to the bathroom. I will be personally switching out the window nearest to the bathroom, and creating an illusion to make it seem like the window is still there. All you will need to do is, wait until its dark and fly Buckbeak in through that window and get him into that bathroom and down those steps as soon as possible, without being seen. I will chat with Alastor during that time so I know he isn't seeing anything on the map."

"All we will need to do." Hermione was muttering to herself as they descended the steps. "I am NOT flying on him this time."

Harry smiled at Hermione. "But it was so much fun last time." That statement caused her to glare at him.

The four of them spent the next three hours in Hogsmeade with Gabrielle staying on Harry's arm the whole time. They spent time in Zonko's where he bought Sirius everything that looked safe enough to use in an enclosed space and even some that didn't. Then in Honeydukes, Harry remembered Mr. Granger's advice on placating the monthly issue women had, and promptly stocked up on a lot of chocolate. All three of the women were laughing at this, but did let him know what their favorite kinds were. . Finally Harry was led into a clothes store where the women pretended he was a dress up doll. Though he pretended to hate the experience, the women could tell he was secretly enjoying the time spent trying on various clothing items, he ended up with three pants and four shirts, new underwear, socks and a new pair of trainers and a promise that they would do

more at a later time. Harry also bought two of the wildest pairs of socks he could find to give to Dobby, for the Gillyweed, including a pair emitted a warning if they got too dirty. Hermione remembered to restock her quill and parchment supplies. When all the shopping was done they all shared a wonderful early dinner in the three broomsticks.

Three hours after entering the village, they were ready to depart. Being early March, the skies were already darkened. Hermione and Fleur headed back to the castle. Hermione was going to be in the hallway across from the bathroom to give the all clear, while Fleur would be on the grounds. If anyone wondered what she was doing she could always say she was headed back to the Beauxbaton's carriage. Gabrielle wanted to fly Buckbeak with Harry.

Harry and Gabrielle made their way up the High Street, past Dervish and Banges, and out toward the edge of the village. Harry had never been in this direction before. The winding lane was leading them out into the wild countryside around Hogsmeade toward the foot of the mountain in whose shadow Hogsmeade laid. Remembering Dumbledore's instructions they climbed up the mountain, following a narrow path. It became darker and darker as the residual lights of Hogsmeade receded behind them until finally Harry had to cast a Lumos to light their way. The climb continued for a while until they came upon a small fissure in the side of the mountain they had been told to look for. They almost missed it but Gabrielle pointed it out and quickly they slipped inside. Once there, they found themselves in a cool very dark cave and reflecting off the light from Harry's wand was the orange eyes of a Hippogriff.

"Hello Buckbeak." Harry said softly, "Do you remember me?"

Harry and Gabrielle bowed low to the noble creature who, after a few seconds of imperious examination of the two, returned the bow.

Harry immediately started to untether him from the rock.

"We're going to take you to Sirius. He's in a much larger cave." Harry explained as he led the creature out of the cave. "Can we ride you?"

The Hippogriff once again looked closely at the two of them and then kneeled to allow them to get on him.

Once the two of them had found themselves sitting on the back of the noble creature, Harry started to talk to the other two bond mates.

"Come over ze Quidditch pitch." Fleur said. "Use ze stands to 'ide yourselves as much as possible. Come around ze west side, low to ze ground and zen 'ead for zhe window."

"I'll have my wand lit so you know which window." Hermione added. "Dumbledore has already removed it, but it seems like its still here. You will have to just fly directly into it. Let me know when you're close and I'll verify when the hall is clear."

When the Noble Hippogriff leapt from the ground, Harry could feel the excitement coming from Gabrielle as her arms tighten around his waist. "It's beautiful 'Arry." She said as she looked out over Hogsmeade in the distance and Hogwarts in front of them. "I wish we could stay up 'ere a while."

"I'll take you on my broom if you'd like."

"I would love for you to."

It definitely took less time to fly than to walk to get back to the castle. Harry had a sudden panic that they might have a problem with the castle wards, but was sure Dumbledore would have taken care of those as well. There was only a slight stirring in the air as they passed the ward boundaries to indicate any magic at all. As they closed in on the Quidditch pitch, Harry noticed what looked like, lines going in all directions on what use to be a perfect grassy field. He tried to figure out what there were, but he didn't get a clear view of whatever it was. As he cleared the Quidditch pitch he could see Hagrid's cabin and it looked like the half giant had a shovel and was digging in the ground in front of it but he didn't have enough time to figure out what he might be doing. "Ok, I'm close." Harry said to Hermione.

"Hall is clear right now, I'm waving my wand." Came her reply.

Harry saw the light at the tip of her wand waving behind a window on the second floor. He guided the Hippogriff toward it. When Harry was only a few dozen yards away from the window he heard Hermione, "It's Mrs. Norris."

"I can't stop now. Too close and will be seen if I do." Harry replied. "Get the bathroom door open, hopefully we get this done before Filch shows up."

Buckbeak came through the window and Harry and Gabrielle quickly slid off and started leading the Hippogriff toward the bathroom door, where Hermione was waiting having started opening the Chamber access. Harry pulled Gabrielle back out of the bathroom, in hopes they could stall Filch if he showed up.

"HA." The voice Harry knew was coming shouted from down the hallway. "Caught you red handed." The old caretaker wheezed as he came down the hall.

Gabrielle looked at the floor and noticed the Hippogriff's footprints. Kissing Harry she said out loud, "I need to use the bathroom." And she quickly ducked into the door.

Harry turned to Filch, "Caught me doing what sir?"

"Buckbeak is zrough ze door, but it 'asn't closed yet."

"Befouling the floor and hiding some kind of creature. I saw something go in that bathroom." Filch turned to go into the bathroom.

Harry grabbed his arm and said, "Excuse me SIR, but my girlfriend is currently in there. You will wait for her to come out before going in there."

"No one orders me around." Filch said jerking free of Harry's grip he rounded on Harry with a grin through his yellowing teeth, "I know you're hiding something in there Potter. I have you now."

"Door is closed." Gabrielle said and a few seconds later. "Floor is clean."

From the bathroom came a flushing sound and Gabrielle opened the door. Looking between Harry and Filch she asked, "Ees somezing wrong?"

Filch shoved past her into the bathroom and started opening every stall muttering "I know something's in here." As he got to the last

stall Myrtle came flying out of the toilet drenching the caretaker from head to foot.

Filch stomped out of the bathroom with water still pouring off of him. He looked at Harry and Gabrielle and snarled before stomping away down the hall.

"That was close." Harry said, as he looked at Gabrielle. "You were brilliant."

Fleur came walking down the hall and as they entered the water covered bathroom, Harry thanked the ghost for her help.

"You know I'd do anything for you Harry, but I really wished you would visit more." The ghost said shyly.

Harry looked at his watch and noticed it was getting close to curfew. "Hermione, is Buckbeak in the Chamber?"

"Not yet, but we're close." It was a few minutes later that she said "He's all in, Sirius said to tell you thanks for the Zonkos stuff. He tried to keep the chocolate as well, but I wasn't about to allow that. I will be there shortly."

When Hermione joined them they made their way to the Headmaster's office to report their success. As they were told to enter, they heard the Headmaster, "That will be all Alastor, thank you."

The Defense against the Dark Arts instructor gave Harry and the three women with him a once over with both his normal eye and his magical one as he stomped past. Once he was out, Harry heard the clicks behind him meaning Dumbledore had secured the office.

"How did it go?" Dumbledore asked.

"Buckbeak is in the Chamber." Harry said. "We had a slight issue with Filch who showed up right as he got him in the bathroom. Gabrielle's quick thinking saved us there." The youngest Delacour blushed.

"Excellent. Well I better go replace a window. I thank you all for an excellent night's work."

Sorry it's still slow. Just seems like a lot of stuff needed to be gotten too. Next chapter will be first day back in classes, included Potions, but after that I'm going to pick up the pace and get to the third task, with a few pit stops for the pranking of the Dursley's, Mr. Crouch and Krum (asking about Hermione), getting the map back.

Chapter 17

The following morning Harry awoke feeling something amiss. Opening his eyes, he found himself in his four poster bed in the Gryffindor common room. Though it had been where he had slept for most of the last four years, he missed the bed he had slept in for the last few days, the one he had woken up the last two mornings to find one of his bond mates sleeping beside him. The memory of Hermione sleeping in his bed the previous morning brought a smile to his lips and his heart. He searched his bond with her and knew she was still asleep. He next turned to Fleur and Gabrielle. Gabrielle, who was now sleeping in the Beauxbaton carriage in her sister's room, was still asleep but Fleur was awake. "Good morning ma Fleur du Matin. Did I get that right?"

Harry felt her smile and warmth radiated in the bond. "Good morning love. If you are calling me your morning flower, yes you did well. Where did you pick zat up?"

"I looked at one of the books you gave Sirius. I wanted to know if your name had a meaning." Harry replied. Harry paused when thinking about the languages. "Why don't you think in French?"

"I'm quite sure I do love."

"But when I hear your thoughts I hear you thinking in English."

"And I 'ear your zoughts in perfect French, but when you zink to me, as now, it's English or whatever you are saying."

"But how? I don't know French, and why do I hear your accent?"

"I 'ave to presume its ze bond 'Arry and ze way your mind interprets my zoughts. We can ask Professor Berceau sometime if you would like. As for ze accent, it's ze only way you've 'eard me speak, whereas I've never 'eard you butcher my language as I do yours."

"I like your accent Fleur. Your voice always makes me smile."

"Zen I 'ope to make you smile as much as I can. And 'Arry," Fleur thought, "I love being your flower." Harry felt her love warming him.

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At the breakfast table, Harry looked down the table at Ron who was sitting with Dean Thomas. He sighed then turned his attention back to the lovely ladies who were sitting next to him. When he did, he noticed Ginny Weasley had sat down next to Gabrielle.

"Ready for your first day at Hogwarts?" Ginny asked Gabrielle.

"Non, but what can I do?" Gabrielle replied.

"I'll get you through it."

Gabrielle looked at her carefully, "No problems wiz what we discussed?"

Ginny's glance flickered past Gabrielle onto Harry, then back to Gabrielle. "I am trying, but it won't happen overnight. But," She again glanced past to see if Harry was listening but noticed he was talking to Hermione. "He seems happier now so you must be good for him."
"

"Zank you. 'E deserves 'appiness and I'm glad I can 'elp 'im feel it." Gabrielle replied. "You know, your brozer, 'e said some zings yesterday."

"Yes I know." Ginny sighed, "He came to me afterwards complaining. He said he was going to send an owl to Mum. But I don't believe what he believes if that is what you want to know. Mum, well she's mum. I love her but she believes everything she reads, especially if it's in Witch Weekly or the Daily Prophet."

"So what made you decide to be my friend?"

"Ron told me what Harry said about choosing." Ginny explained, again glancing to see if Harry was listening. "After thinking about, I..well, I prefer to be Harry's friend rather than nothing to him, and I know that friendship must start with you. I..uh.. I really don't know anything about your heritage so if I do say something wrong please let me know."

Gabrielle smiled at Ginny as she herself felt Harry sighing in relief. "Listening again?"

"Sorry, but after Ron yesterday I really didn't want you hurt."

"I'll be glad to Ginny." Gabrielle said to her new friend. "So we 'ave Charms first zing zis morning?"

"You'll love Professor Flitwick." Ginny said smiling a little in relief, as the two of them start discussing the class.

Harry looked at Fleur and saw her looking at the two younger girls with a smile, Fleur turned to Harry. "I'm glad she's got someone to 'elp 'er today."

"I am too, though I'll still worry about her in Potions. Snape really hates me, and if he takes it out on her, I'll...."

At that time the mail started being delivered and a cluster of owls were landing all around Hermione, all jostling for position. Harry grabbed her goblet before it was knocked over.

"What on earth - ?" Hermione said, taking the letter from the gray owl, opening it, and starting to read. "Oh really!" she sputtered, going rather red.

"What's up?" ask Ginny who was now looking at them.

"It,'s - oh how ridiculous -"

She thrust the letter at Harry, who saw that it was not handwritten, but composed from pasted letters that seemed to have been cut out of the Daily Prophet.

YOU ARE A WICKED GIRL. HARRY POTTER DESERVES

BETTER. GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM MUGGLE.

"They're all like it!" said Hermione desperately, opening one letter after another.

"Harry Potter can do much better than the likes of you. . . ."

'You deserve to be boiled in frog spawn. . . .'

Before Hermione opened any more, Fleur pulled out her wand and said "Evanescio" and the pile of letters disappeared. Seeing the frustration in her bond sister she said. "Don't worry about zem 'Ermione. Eet just people who are responding to zat magazine. Father gets letters like zis all ze time. If you let it bother you, zen zey win zeir little game."

"And I can't do better than you and this summer I will tell the world." Hermione heard and she looked up into those emerald eyes. "You know I love you." Harry continued, and Hermione felt the frustration disappear.

When Harry and Hermione made it to Herbology, Ron came over and said to Hermione, "See I warned you not to mess with Rita. I warned you." He then turned to Harry, "Like I warned you, maybe now you'll listen now."

"Ron, if this is about your warning concerning my girlfriend, then no, I will not listen now or ever." Harry replied coldly and turned his back on his long time friend as he pulled out all the homework he needed to turn in and prepared for class leaving Ron red faced. Ron turned to Hermione and was about to say something to her when she also turned her back to him and stood beside Harry.

As Harry and Hermione left the greenhouse for their Care of Magical Creatures class, they saw Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle descending the stone steps of the castle. Pansy Parkinson was whispering and giggling behind them with her gang of Slytherin girls. Catching sight of Hermione, Pansy called, "We couldn't help but notice how much you enjoyed your fan mail."

Hermione just ignored her; not wanting to give her the satisfaction of knowing how much the mail had irritated her.

Hagrid was waiting for them outside his cabin with a fresh supply of open crates at his feet. Harry's heart sank at the sight of the crates - surely not another skrewt hatching? - but when he got near enough to see inside, he found himself looking at a number of flurry black creatures with long snouts. Their front paws were curiously flat, like spades, and they were blinking up at the class, looking politely puzzled at all the attention.

"These're nifflers," said Hagrid, when the class had gathered around. "Yeh find 'em down mines mostly. They like sparkly stuff. . . . There yeh go, look."

One of the nifflers had suddenly leapt up and attempted to bite Pansy Parkinson's watch off her wrist. She shrieked and jumped backward.

"Useful little treasure detectors," said Hagrid happily. "Thought we'd have some fun with 'em today. See over there?" He pointed at the large patch of freshly turned earth. "I've buried some gold coins. I've got a prize fer whoever picks the niffler that digs up most. Jus' take off all yer valuables, an' choose a niffler, an get ready ter set 'em loose."

Harry remembered seeing Hagrid last night with a shovel when he was flying Buckbeak. "So that's what he was doing." He took off his watch, which he was only wearing out of habit, as it didn't work anymore, and stuffed it into his pocket. Then he picked up a niffler. It put its long snout in Harry's ear and sniffed enthusiastically, causing Hermione to laugh "Do you have a treasure in your ear Harry?" she asked before reaching down and picking up her own niffler.

It was easily the most fun they had ever had in Care of Magical Creatures. The nifflers dove in and out of the patch of earth as though it were water, each scurrying back to the student who had released it and spitting gold into their hands.

Harry noticed that Ron's niffler was particularly efficient; it had soon filled his lap with coins.

"Can you buy these as pets, Hagrid?" Ron asked excitedly as his niffler dove back into the soil once again, splattering his robes with dirt.

"Yer mum wouldn' be happy, Ron," said Hagrid, grinning. "They wreck houses, nifflers. I reckon they've nearly got the lot, now," he added, pacing around the patch of earth while the nifflers continued to dive. "I on'y buried a hundred coins."

"Well, let's check how yeh've done!" said Hagrid. "Count yer coins! An' there's no point tryin' ter steal any, Goyle," he added, his beetle-

black eyes narrowed. "It's leprechaun gold. Vanishes after a few hours."

Goyle emptied his pockets, looking extremely sulky. It turned out that Ron's niffler had been most successful, so Hagrid gave him an enormous slab of Honeydukes chocolate for a prize. The bell rang across the grounds for lunch; Ron and the rest of the class started up the slope to the castle while Harry and Hermione stayed behind to help Hagrid put the nifflers back in their boxes.

"Yeh've been doing alright Harry?" Hagrid asked. "I've seen yeh with that young lady. Seems like you two are hitten it off."

Harry smiled at his half-giant friend. "Gabrielle is special." He glanced over at Hermione, "I wish I could tell him about you and Fleur as well."

"And we know how well Hagrid keeps a secret." Hermione replied. "Can you say Fluffy?"

"I met her father yeh know. He was asken about yeh since yeh had saved his daughters' lives and everything." Hagrid continued. "Told em that just the way yeh are." He looked around. "And where's Ron?"

"He doesn't think I should be seeing someone of my girlfriend's heritage." Harry replied.

"Veela?" Hagrid asked. "That's just silly. Some of the nicest people yeh ever could meet. Fierce tempers though."

"Yeah I've heard."

Hagrid scratched his beard looking thoughtful, "Maybe I'll have to get yeh some dragon hide for yeh ter line your robes with. That fire they can throw, well it can sting a little." Hermione stifled a laugh at the look on Harry's face. "As fer Ron, well hopefully he'll come around. Yeh can't tell people how ter think."

The three of them chatted for while longer with Hermione telling Hagrid about the hate mail she had received that morning.

"Aaah, don worry," said Hagrid gently, looking down at her. "I got some o' those letters an all, after Rita Skeeter wrote abou me mum. 'Yeh're a monster an yeh should be put down.' 'Yer mother killed innocent people an if you had any decency you d jump in a lake.'"

"No!" said Hermione, looking shocked.

"Yeah," said Hagrid, heaving the niffler crates over by his cabin wall. "They're jus' nutters, Hermione. Don' open 'em if yeh get any more. Chuck 'em straigh' in the fire."

"That's sort of what Gabrielle's sister said." Hermione said.

"Yer a smart one Hermione, do the smart thing." Hagrid replied.

"I hate that Skeeter woman though." Hermione burst out. "I will get her back."

They chatted some more before Harry and Hermione made their way to the Great Hall for lunch. Fleur was sitting next to Gabrielle who was chatting with Ginny. When Gabrielle saw Harry, she threw her arms around him and kissed him and started telling him how much fun she had had in Charms. "We learned cheering charms today." She exclaimed and proceeded to kiss Harry again so show him how cheerful she was.

During double divinations in the afternoon, Harry wished he had let Gabrielle cast the Cheering Charm on him before he came. He found himself following the thoughts of his bond mates. Gabrielle was in Herbology while Fleur and Hermione had gone to the library to study. Even the arithmancy Hermione was working on seemed more interesting than discovering why Venus was so important to astrology.

"Why take the class if you don't like it?" He heard Hermione question.

Harry looked over at Ron who was sitting with Seamus. "Well I use to have a friend in the class."

"I know Harry. I'm sorry." Hermione replied. "Maybe work with Neville. Or you can switch classes next year and try to catch up with Gabrielle. Or maybe Ron will come around."

"Maybe....crap, everyone is looking at me. Trelawney probably predicted my death again."

"Pay attention Harry." Hermione chided. "I need to get back to studying. Fleur and I are going down to the Chamber shortly to see if they need anything. We'll see you at dinner."

"Fine, leave me to my suffering."

They decided to have dinner in the chamber that evening with Remus and Sirius. Harry and Hermione went to the kitchens to give Dobby his socks and to see if the elves could prepare some food for them to take down.

The house-elves gave them a very cheery welcome, bowing and curtsying and bustling around making a nice dinner and packing it up. Harry couldn't believe all the food they were putting in the basket. Dobby was ecstatic about his present.

"Harry Potter is too good to Dobby!" he squeaked, wiping large tears out of his enormous eyes.

"Dobby a lot has happened because I was in that lake that day." said Harry. "I was able to save Gabrielle and Fleur because of you. It was because of you, that I was there. I owe you a lot more than two pairs of socks, but it's a start. You're my friend Dobby."

"Dobby, where's Winky?" said Hermione, who was looking around.

"Winky is over there by the fire, miss," said Dobby quietly, his ears drooping slightly.

"Oh dear," said Hermione as she spotted Winky.

Harry looked over at the fireplace too. Winky was sitting on the same stool as last time, but she had allowed herself to become so filthy that she was not immediately distinguishable from the smoke-blackened brick behind her. Her clothes were ragged and unwashed. She was clutching a bottle of butterbeer and swaying slightly on her stool, staring into the fire. As they watched her, she gave an enormous hiccup.

"Winky is getting through six bottles a day now," Dobby whispered to Harry.

"Well, it's not strong, that stuff," Harry said.

But Dobby shook his head. "'Tis strong for a house-elf, sir," he said. "She pines for her family and nothing Dobby does will persuade her that Professor Dumbledore is her master now. She keeps saying that Mr. Crouch needs her."

"Master is needing his - hic - Winky!" whimpered Winky. "Master cannot - hic - manage - hic - all by himself. . . . Master is - hic - trusting Winky with - hic - the most important - hic - the most secret..." and the bottle of butterbeer she had in her hand dropped to the floor as she slid off her stool onto the heart snoring heavily.

The other elves started covering her with a tablecloth. Seeing Hermione was about to say something, "This isn't the time love."

"But they're just covering her up. They should be trying to cheer her up instead." Hermione insisted.

"Maybe there is a head elf you can talk to about it." Harry said. "But right now, let's go down and eat."

"But it's not right Harry." Hermione said. "They shouldn't be slaves."

"Maybe there's something we don't know. I mean Dumbledore isn't a bad person, but you just heard Dobby say he was their Master." Harry thought. "Ask him about them. He might give you a better idea of what it all means. You might also ask Fleur, it's possible her family has house-elves."

The thought that her bond sister and friend might herself have house-elves stunned Hermione. The thought to Fleur was out before she could think anything else, "Fleur, does your family have house elves?"

"Of course. We 'ave three."

Hermione was stunned. Her bond sister's family, who said she was part of their family, enslaved three beings and she immediately

thought back "How could you? How can your family enslave intelligent beings?"

Fleur took a mental step back at the pure loathing in Hermione's voice. "ermione, what do you know about 'ouse-elves?" She asked cautiously.

"I know they're intelligent and can be nice and that they are enslaved and not paid or anything."

"So you're equating zeir slavery with ze enslavement of man over man aren't you?"

"Of course, slavery is slavery!" Hermione argued. "No one should own another being."

"You own a cat don't you?" Fleur asked. "Which is 'alf-kneazle. He's intelligent."

"I...I...crookshanks isn't my slave." Hermione said.

" 'e isn't?" Fleur asked. "And how many times 'ave you asked 'im what 'e wants to do? I agree it's not quite ze same, but zere are all kinds of bonds and relationships zat bring people and beings together. For example, are you 'Arry's slave?"

"WHAT? Of course not."

"But you are bound to 'im for ze rest of your life."

"But...but that's different, that is love and he can't force me to do anything."

"True, but you and 'e 'ave ze capability of making each others lives miserable or 'appy depending on 'ow you use ze bond. You enjoy feeling ze love 'arry 'as for you don't you?"

"Yes, of course."

"What if ze bond were to disappear, 'ow would you feel if zat feeling of love were to disappear."

Hermione considered this, even after so few days, the love that flowed over that bond had become an integral part of her being. "I would miss it desperately."

"And you would want it back wouldn't you?"

"Yes, of course but what does this have to do with house-elves."

" 'Ouse-elves love work 'Ermione. I know you find it 'ard to accept zat, but it's a proven fact in ze magical world. Zey get ze same joy out of working zat you get out of being loved." Fleur explained. "Ze elves get similar joy out of being asked to do work as you get when 'arry tell you 'e loves you. Ze bond to zeir families gives zem work to care for zem, ze constant needs of ze families is to zem like ze constant love you feel from 'arry. To zem to be set free, is like you losing your bond with 'arry."

"But Dobby...."

"Was abused and told to do things zat 'e 'ated, just like abuse of a person by someone zey love can override ze love itself, 'e wanted to leave and 'e is afraid of recommitting 'imself to a bond. But I know 'e loves 'arry. If 'arry were to ask 'im to be 'is elf, 'e would agree without a moments 'esitation."

"But why won't they take money?"

"In your love with 'Arry, do you zink someday you and 'e will be intimate?"

Hermione thought back to the previous morning's conversation with Harry, she blushed slightly. "Yes, of course, when the time is right."

"And would you want money for being intimate with 'im?"

"Of course not," Hermione exclaimed, "That would make it seem like I was a...." and her words trailed off.

"Exactly, it's ze same with elves, zey feel it cheapens ze experience for zem. 'Ermione, it's not perfect, just like a lot of marriages aren't perfect. You know spouses and children are abused, so should marriage be outlawed?"

"No." Hermione sighed. "I'm sorry Fleur. I guess I did a Ron and have been acting without really thinking on this one. I've been letting my non-magical upbringing influence how I view things in the magical world."

"Zat's not a bad zing Hermione. A fresh outlook is always good, but remember to try to understand both sides before making your conclusions. Wanting to defend elves shows me you 'ave a good 'eart 'Ermione and I do agree zat zey should not be abused. Concentrate on 'elping zem zat way, not by trying to set zem all free."

"Thanks." Hermione said as she looked around the kitchen seeing the house-elves all working and at particularly at the tablecloth covered package that was Winky. She thought of what Fleur said and compared it to losing Harry's bond and a wave of understanding broke over her. She turned and said "Dobby, take care of Winky please."

"I try Miss." The little elf said. "But she's not wanting my help." He handed the basket of food to them and turned sadly back to his friend.

Harry and Hermione joined the other in the Chamber a short time later where he found out that Remus had had Hermione escort him out to see the twins and to see Dumbledore and finally order the books and equipment he thought he would need for Basilisk job. When there were all sitting around the table he told them what he wanted to see Dumbledore about.

"When I was talking to the Weasley's they made an excellent suggestion and I confirmed it with Dumbledore." Remus said. "On Saturday we all are taking a trip to Surrey. The twins suggested we needed, as they put it, 'to survey the battlefield.' We need a better idea of how to disrupt a muggle household. So this Saturday we will figure out a way to get your Aunt and Uncle out of the house for a few hours and we will go take a look around. Harry you can describe their typical day, while those of us who have lived amongst muggles can describe the various muggle devices and such to those who are not so familiar."

"You've lived in the muggle world?" Harry asked.

"Yes Harry. There is very little work on the correct side of the law in the magical world if you're a werewolf." Remus explained. "I've had a lot of jobs, some in the magical world, and some in the muggle. It's hard to hold down a job in the non-magical world when you disappear for two or three days a month and come back looking like you've been on a drinking binge the whole time but can't explain what has happened to you."

"I still wish you were teaching here Moony." Harry said. "I mean Moody knows his stuff, but he's not you."

"Thanks Harry. That means a lot."

"Remus." Fleur said looking at the Werewolf. "Try to learn some French. If you can start speaking it passably, I'm sure my father can get you a job somewhere in France."

"I..I don't like to take charity Miss Delacour."

"Charity it would not be, I assure you." Fleur said. "Zough 'aving seen some of 'Arry's memories of previous defense instructors, I can't say zat intelligence must be a 'iring factor 'ere at 'Ogwarts. You impressed both 'Arry and 'Ermione wiz your knowledge and teaching skills. You 'ave the courage and intelligence to take on challenges zat you have no experience and I would hazard a guess zat you do zem well. I would also guess zat you scored very well on your OWLs and NEWTs."

"Well enough I suppose."

"Moony is being modest. He was near the top of our class." Sirius said. "Would have been top, if he didn't have to lose so much time to a furry little problem and having to keep a bunch of friends in line."

Remus snorted, "Yeah like I was able to keep you and James in line."

"So, it wouldn't be charity." Fleur said. "I would say it would be the French tapping a potential ze English do not realize zey 'ave."

"I guess we can approach the subject later on." Remus replied looking a little embarrassed at the praise. "Learning another

language is always a good skill to have, no matter what the outcome."

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Later in the evening when Harry was getting ready for bed, Ron said. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Harry sat down and looked over at Ron, "Tell you what?"

"About the gold."

"What gold?" said Harry bewildered.

"The gold I gave you at the Quidditch World Cup," said Ron. "The leprechaun gold I gave you for my Omnioculars, in the Top Box. Why didn't you tell me it disappeared?"

Harry had to think for a moment before he realized what Ron was talking about.

"Oh . . ." he said, the memory coming back to him at last. "I dunno ... I never noticed it had gone. I was more worried about my wand, wasn't I?"

Ron rolled over and muttered, "Must be nice to have so much money you don't notice when it disappears and everything else as well."

Harry felt a bit of anger rise in him. "Yeah well it must be nice to have parents and a family."

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At breakfast the next morning, Hermione received additional hate mail and Fleur continued to make them disappear unopened. The last owl to arrive resembled a large grey feather duster and it landed not in front of Hermione but in front of Harry. Attached to the leg of the ancient bird was a red envelope. Harry recognized the owl as Errol, the Weasley's family bird, and he knew the envelope contained a Howler. Harry took a second to glare at Ron who was sitting down the table staring back with an embarrassed but determined look on his face. Harry remembered Neville's warning to

Ron two years earlier about not ignoring the things, he reached over and removed it from Errol and opened it. Instantly the Great Hall was filled with Molly Weasley's magically enhanced voice.

HARRY POTTER WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING CAVORTING ABOUT WITH SOME VEELA HUSSY. RON TOL....

The envelope burst into flames directly in front of Harry and as he looked up he could almost see fire in the eyes of Fleur as she put away her wand. Harry could see her struggling to stay calm as he felt her anger. He looked over at Gabrielle and felt her anger as well as tears in her eyes. Ginny whose face was redder than her hair was speaking softly to the younger Veela. He looked at Hermione and could see her concentrating and knew she was trying to comfort the two Delacours. Harry could hear the laughter coming from the Slytherins and several other students. All of this he noticed, but it all seemed detached as well. He was riding a surge of anger at his friend and his friend's mother. It was at least a minute before he returned to what was happening around him.

"Harry." Ginny said at last, "If I can borrow Hedwig, I'll write to mum."

"And we'll throw in our glowing recommendation for the fine lady ourselves." Fred and George said as that sat down on either side of Fleur.

"We're sorry mate." George said.

"No excuse for Mum on this one." Fred agreed.

"Thanks guys. I appreciate that. Have you met Gabrielle's sister Fleur?" Harry asked motioning to the person between them.

"Well we knew who she was of course. The beautiful Beauxbaton Champion."

"Their beauty runs in the family it seems."

"Of course she might have enchanted us." Fred said grinning at his brother.

"It so, she can enchant me anytime." George answered.

"Nice to meet both of you." Fleur said smiling at them with her perfect smile. "Your reputation 'as proceeded you zough so no trying anyzing.. As for enchanting you, I'm sorry to say my 'eart is already spoken for." She glanced at Harry, "and 'e 'as ze most gorgeous eyes."

"Too late again." Fred said to George hanging his head, then to Harry. "Hey did you know Professor Lupin was one of the original Marauders?"

"Really?" Harry asked trying to act surprised.

"Yeah, he approached us yesterday about pranking your relatives." George said. "We tried to find you last night to ask you about that. I mean we're definitely in, but why is Lupin interested in them anyway?"

"Because the Marauders were best friends." Harry said. "And Moony is very interested in the Dursleys, because they weren't too nice to the son of another Marauder." Harry waited for a second before continuing, "Guys, Prongs was my father."

Fred and George stared at each other over Fleur, then they turned back to Harry and stared at him like he had grown six arms, "Really? So you know who Padfoot and Wormtail are also?"

"Yeah, but I'll tell you about them another time. Right now we've got to get to class." And leaving the twins looking frustrated, Harry gave Gabrielle a quick kiss and left with Hermione out of the Great Hall.

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In History of Magic, Harry discovered one very annoying thing about the bond with Hermione. Her willingness to use it to keep him awake in class. Each time he was ready to follow most of the class into slumber, she would do or say something to keep him awake.

"Just let me sleep Hermione."

"No Harry. You need to learn this."

"Why? Are we expecting Goblins to rebel again?"

"You never know what might happen. If nothing else, at least read the material. If you fall asleep, there'll be no kisses from me today and I'm sure I can get Fleur and Gabrielle to agree as well."

"That's bloody mean." But Harry was sufficiently motivated to not fall asleep. Hermione had a smile on her lips as they left the classroom while Harry was mentally grumbling about blackmailing bond mates.

Harry had been dreading Potions and when they arrived later in the afternoon; he realized his dreading did not nearly cover what he should have been feeling. Pansy Parkinson had another copy of the Witch Weekly and Harry could hear Hermione's sigh. Draco was flashing his Potter Stink's badge every couple of minutes. When Snape entered the dungeon classroom, his eyes immediately fell upon Harry. "Well, well our hero of the lake has decided to join us. I'm sure you were just looking for more publicity for your ego weren't you Potter?"

Harry hated the man he saw glaring at him. He could feel the anger build inside, until Hermione and Fleur both talking to him.

"Non, 'Arry. Don't let 'im bother you."

"Harry he's just trying to anger you. You already have detention tonight and he wants to add more. Don't give him the satisfaction."

Harry felt the anger settle and he answered evenly "No sir."

Snape stared at him for a few more seconds before turning to the blackboard. "Today we will be working on Wit Sharpening potions. Something Mr. Longbottom should stock up on. Instructions are now on the board, by the time class is over, your potion should be a light blue in color."

As Harry and Hermione started getting out their ingredients and setting up the cauldrons, Pansy took an opportunity of Snape's back turned toward the class to toss the magazine onto Hermione's desk and proceeded to act like she was writing a letter. She and her gang of girls giggled.

Hermione rolled her eyes and was about to toss it back when Professor Snape was there and took it from her, "Ten points from Gryffindor for having inappropriate reading material out in class. Ah

yes the infamous Mr. Potter's complicated love life." He sneered as he looked down at the Magazine.

Harry could feel his face burning as Snape started reading the article out loud to the class, pausing at the end of every sentence to allow the Slytherins a hearty laugh. The article sounded ten times worse when read by Snape. Even Hermione was blushing scarlet now.

"'. . . Harry Potter's well-wishers must hope that, next time, he bestows his heart upon a worthier candidate.' How very touching," sneered Snape, rolling up the magazine to continued gales of laughter from the Slytherins. "It didn't take you long to find another groupie did it Potter. Whether she is a worthier candidate, well after that Howler this morning, one might not think so."

"You leave Gabrielle out of this." Harry said staring at the Potion's Master, his anger rising again.

"Fifteen points from Gryffindor for the cheek Potter, and since it's obvious that Miss Granger has broken your heart, maybe we should separate you two in class. You can take the table in front of my desk."

Harry looked at Hermione who looked back at him, "Don't let him get to you Harry. He's trying to push. Ignore him." He grabbed his potions kit and Cauldron and made his way down to the table Snape had indicated. Snape followed him and as Harry started unpacking his ingredients again Snape sat down beside him.

"All this press attention seems to have inflated your already over-large head. Potter," said Snape quietly, once the rest of the class had settled down again.

Harry didn't answer. He knew Snape was trying to provoke him; he had done this too many times before.

"You might be laboring under the delusion that the entire wizarding world is impressed with you," Snape went on, so quietly that no one else could hear him. Harry started pounding the scarab beetles the potion called for. He pretended each beetle was a little Snape, soon he had them to a very fine powder as Snape continued "but I don't care how many times your picture appears in the papers. To me,

Potter, you are nothing but a nasty little boy who considers rules to be beneath him."

Harry tipped the powdered beetles into his cauldron and started cutting up his ginger roots. His hands were shaking slightly out of anger, but he kept his eyes down, as though he couldn't hear what Snape was saying to him.

His bond mates had picked up his anger and started trying to calm him. Hermione was pleading with him to ignore Snape.

"So I give you fair warning, Potter," Snape continued in a softer and more dangerous voice, "pint-sized celebrity or not - if I catch you breaking into my office one more time -"

"I've never broken into your office." Harry replied. "Why would I?"

"Don't lie to me," Snape hissed, his fathomless black eyes boring into Harry's. "Boomslang skin, Gillyweed, both come from my private stores, and I know who stole them."

Harry stared back at Snape, determined not to blink or to look guilty. In truth, he hadn't stolen either of these things from Snape. Hermione had taken the boomslang skin back in their second year - they had needed it for the Polyjuice Potion - and while Snape had suspected Harry at the time, he had never been able to prove it. Dobby, of course, had stolen the gillyweed.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Harry lied.

"You were out of bed on the night my office was broken into!" Snape hissed. "I know it. Potter! Now, Mad-Eye Moody might have joined your fan club, but I will not tolerate your behavior! One more nighttime stroll into my office, Potter, and you will pay!"

"Right," said Harry coolly, turning back to his ginger roots. "I'll bear that in mind if I ever get the urge to go in there."

Snape's eyes flashed. He plunged a hand into the inside of his black robes. For one wild moment, Harry thought Snape was about to pull out his wand and curse him - then he saw that Snape had drawn out a small crystal bottle of a completely clear potion. Harry stared at it.

"Do you know what this is Potter?" Snape said, his eyes glittering dangerously again.

"No," said Harry, with complete honesty this time.

"It is Veritaserum - a Truth Potion so powerful that three drops would have you spilling your innermost secrets for this entire class to hear," said Snape viciously.

"Now, the use of this potion is controlled by very strict Ministry guidelines. But unless you watch your step, you might just find that my hand slips" - he shook the crystal bottle slightly - "right over your evening pumpkin juice. And then, Potter . . . then we'll find out whether you've been in my office or not."

"Eet's five years in prison in France for ze illegal use of truth serum." Fleur said. "Probably similar 'ere, 'e wouldn't risk it."

Hermione made a suggestion to Harry that caused him to smile. Turning to Snape he said, "Thank you sir for the warning, I think I will notify my head of house of it, just in case. How many years in Azkaban is it for that illegal use of that potion?" Harry mentally grinned at his next statement, "Maybe they'll give you Sirius's old cell." Harry felt the look on Snape's face was worth whatever punishment he knew was coming.

"Potter.." Snape snarled menacingly, but before he could continue there was a knock on the dungeon door. Looking around at the door he called "Enter." Then looking back at Harry he snarled quietly, "This isn't finished Potter." And he walked to his desk.

The class looked around as the door opened. Professor Karkaroff came in. Everyone watched him as he walked up toward Snape's desk. He was twisting his finger around his goatee and looking agitated.

"We need to talk," said Karkaroff abruptly when he had reached Snape. He seemed so determined that nobody should hear what he was saying that he was barely opening his lips; it was as though he were a rather poor ventriloquist. Harry kept his eyes on his ginger roots he was cutting, but he was curious to what Karkaroff had to say to Snape.

"I'll talk to you after my lesson, Karkaroff," Snape muttered, but Karkaroff interrupted him.

"I want to talk now, while you can't slip off, Severus. You've been avoiding me."

"After the lesson." Snape snapped.

Under the pretext of holding up a measuring cup to see if he'd poured out enough armadillo bile, Harry sneaked a sidelong glance at the pair of them. Karkaroff looked extremely worried and Snape looked angry.

Karkaroff hovered behind Snape's desk for the rest of the period. He seemed intent on preventing Snape from slipping away at the end of class. Keen to hear what Karkaroff wanted to say, Harry deliberately knocked over his bottle of armadillo bile with two minutes to go to the bell, which gave him an excuse to duck down behind his cauldron and mop up while the rest of the class moved noisily toward the door.

"Harry what are you doing?" Hermione asked.

"I want to hear what Karkaroff has to say to Snape."

"Haven't you angered Snape enough for one day?" Hermione replied in exasperation but recognizing the stubbornness of her bond mate she mentally shrugged. "I'll be right out here waiting."

"What's so urgent?" Harry heard Snape hiss at Karkaroff.

"This," said Karkaroff, and Harry, peering around the edge of his cauldron, saw Karkaroff pull up the left-hand sleeve of his robe and show Snape something on his inner forearm.

"Well?" said Karkaroff, still making every effort not to move his lips. "Do you see? It's never been this clear, never since -"

"Put it away!" snarled Snape, his black eyes sweeping the classroom.

"But you must have noticed -" Karkaroff began in an agitated voice.

"We can talk later, Karkaroff!" spat Snape. "Potter! What are you doing?"

"Cleaning up my armadillo bile, Professor," said Harry innocently, straightening up and showing Snape the sodden rag he was holding.

Karkaroff turned on his heel and strode out of the dungeon. He looked both worried and angry. Not wanting to remain alone with an exceptionally angry Snape, Harry threw his books and ingredients back into his bag and left at top speed.

When he caught up to Hermione he asked "Did you listen?"

"Yes," Hermione sighed. "But mostly to make sure Professor Snape didn't try to kill you. You really didn't have to add that part about Sirius's cell. All I said was to tell him you would let McGonagall know about the threat."

"You heard his threats to me and his insults." Harry replied. "He's been doing it for years."

"I know, just be careful."

"Any ideas on what Karakaroff's thing with Snape meant? He was showing something on his forearm." Harry asked.

"No. Maybe a rash and he needs a potion?" Hermione said. "There are some embarrassing diseases in the magical world."

When they asked Sirius later in the evening, he didn't know either. "I just don't know why Dumbledore has him teaching here. Snape's always been fascinated by the Dark Arts, he was famous for it at school. Slimy, oily, greasy-haired kid, he was," Sirius added, "Snape knew more curses when he arrived at school than half the kids in seventh year, and he was part of a gang of Slytherins who nearly all turned out to be Death Eaters."

"Professor Dumbledore keeps telling me that he trusts Snape." Harry said.

"Well he must have his reasons." Sirius said.

When Harry told Sirius about Snape threatening him with Veritaserum, "Fleur was right, Snape wouldn't risk it. The test for it is pretty easy and the blame would fall on him pretty quickly. Now as funny as mentioning my old cell to Snivalus was, you have to be careful Harry. He can make your life miserable."

Harry had to leave almost immediately afterward to make it to his detention with Snape who made him spend the entire two hours cleaning his personal store room. Harry suspected him of trying to catch him pilfering. His bond mates kept him company during the entire time, and no matter what Snape did to antagonize him, Harry refused to answer or respond in anyway.

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The rest of the week past pretty quickly, Hermione continued to get hate mail, and even a few Howlers appeared. Fleur had taught all of them the vanishing spell and the Howlers vanished before they could even start to yell. Hermione was still fuming about Rita Skeeter and after their next Defense against the Dark arts class she stayed behind and asked Professor Moody if Rita might have been under an invisibility cloak at the second task and he confirmed she wasn't.

"I want to know how she's listening into private conversations when she's supposed to be banned from the grounds!" said Hermione. "If it's illegal, I'll have her."

Friday morning Hedwig returned with a letter to Ginny who had by then developed a good friendship with Gabrielle. She took the letter and turned red as she read it. When she finished reading it she looked up to see everyone's eyes on her.

"Well..uh.. obviously it's from mum. She still not very happy with your..uh..choice of girlfriend Harry." Ginny looked nervously at Gabrielle, "She even mentions that..she thought..well..she thought that I would make a better match for Harry. She also said to tell you that," Ginny turned further red, "Remember these are my mum's words, not mine. She said that no matter what mistakes you make she'll always think of you as her son, and you're always welcome at the Burrow."

"Let me guess." Harry said, "Gabrielle isn't though."

"She didn't actually say that, but she underlined the 'He' in the 'He is always welcome' when she wrote it." Ginny replied.

"Thanks Ginny. I appreciate you trying." Harry said.

"Harry, if she could see how happier you are, she'd come around." Ginny said. "Maybe this summer.."

"I doubt I'll be coming to the Burrow this summer Ginny." Harry interrupted her. "I'm not sure what Dumbledore has planned for me yet, but I've been invited to the Delacours this summer."

"Oh." Ginny replied.

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Later while Harry was forcing himself to stay awake again in history of Magic, he felt a wave of sadness from Gabrielle, who he knew was currently in her Arithmancy class.

"What's wrong?" Harry asked her.

"Zere is a Ravenclaw girl who no one ever sits with. She's been in a couple of my classes and it's been ze same in both of them." Gabrielle said. "Ze others go out of zeir way to be mean to 'er. Zey call 'er Loony."

Harry could see the girl in question; she had straggly, waist-length, dirty blonde hair, very pale eyebrows and protuberant eyes that gave her a permanently surprised look. He felt Gabrielle go over to the girl's table and sit down beside her.

"I'm.." Gabrielle started,

"You're Harry Potter's girlfriend." The blonde girl said dreamily. "I hope he treats you better than he did Pavarti Patil at the Yule Ball. Her sister Padma said he and his friend Ron weren't very nice to them. Oh..I'm Luna. Luna Lovegood."

Gabrielle was slightly taken aback by the opening remarks of this girl, but continued, "I'm Gabrielle, Gabrielle Delacour, yes I am Harry's girlfriend and he treats me very well."

"That's nice." Luna said.

The two of them started what Gabrielle later defined as an extremely odd conversation.

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Friday afternoons were torture for Harry. It meant being stuck in the dungeons enduring double potions with his least favorite professor. Fortunately, Snape wasn't taking his hatred of Harry out on Gabrielle who made it through the class unscathed earlier in the week. Though she had complained thoroughly to Fleur about the quality of education he provided.

Snape once again had them working on a different antidote. Frustrating to Harry was that even when he did everything Hermione was telling him to do, his potion was still not quite right. It was red in color instead of a vibrant pink it was suppose to be earning him a sneer from Professor Snape and another failing grade.

" 'arry love." He heard Fleur say, after he had put away his ingredients and cleaned his cauldron. "Will you do me a favor? Run your finger over ze interior of your cauldron below ze curve at ze top."

Harry confused at the request, did as his bond mate had asked, and when he looked at his finger it was covered in an oily residue.

"Love," Fleur sighed, "You're not cleaning your cauldron well. Ze condensation from ze boiling liquids will leave residue zere, and ze next potion might get it mixed in. When you do a cleaning spell you must remember to zink about zhe whole interior of ze cauldron, not just what you can see. Also before you start any new potion, run a rag over the interior just to make sure."

"How did you know?" Harry asked.

"One of ze ways for zat antidote to turn red, is if eets contaminated with ginger root. You were working with zat ingredient last time." Fleur explained. "It's a common mistake in potions. Any competent instructor should 'ave pointed it out to you a long time ago."

"Thanks my Flower." Harry said, and could feel her happiness and relief. He realized she had been concerned that he wouldn't take the criticism well. "Never think that. I appreciate everything you do for me."

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After Dinner they went down to the Chamber for a short time to check on Sirius and Remus before going back up to the Gryffindor Common room for the Party the Twins had promised that night. They found Sirius and Remus spitting out French sounding words to each other. When the two Marauders saw the four of them, they had some exciting news.

"Harry," Sirius said. "We found another one of those Runes symbols like the one in the bathroom on the wall over there. He pointed to the wall between the legs of the Statue of Salazar.

"Found it?" Remus asked, "Your unique statue cleaning method cleaned the dirt out of it you mean."

"Well it worked didn't it?" Padfoot replied grinning.

All of them walked over and looked, a certain area of the wall looked like it had been wetted down was cleaner than the surrounding area, and they could clearly see the outline of another Eternity Rune.

Harry was about to utter the word to open, when Hermione stopped him. "Wait Harry. Remember the traps Professor Dumbledore had to disable on the steps? What if this is trapped in some way? Or another dangerous creature is behind that door? I think Professor Dumbledore needs to be down here before we try to open it."

"Yeah you're right, but we need to get back to the Common room for the party." Harry replied.

"Let's tell him about it tonight, and maybe after our little visit to Surrey tomorrow we can see what that is."

"That works. If there is a door there, it's been closed for at least fifty years and maybe a thousand, another day won't be a problem."

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Three hours later, a highly embarrassed Harry was sitting on a 'Throne' made by the twins with a slightly smaller throne for Gabrielle. The story of what happened under the waters of the black lake had been told much to Harry's further embarrassment, and Fleur had unofficially been adopted into the house. As Fred told the common room when he proposed the adoption, "We have to claim them if Harry doesn't throw them back." Harry had told everyone that this time there had been no clues to the next task.

"You're going to win it Harry." Neville called out.

"I doubt it. I've just been lucky so far. Something tells me the third one is going to be a lot harder." Harry replied.

"And you don't give yourself enough credit my love." Fleur said.

The party finally ended, Fleur and Gabrielle headed off to the Beauxbaton Carriage after a whistling crowd got to see Harry's good night kiss to his girlfriend, and finally Harry and Hermione went off to their separate dorms.

I would appreciate any feedback on my idea of the Elf Bond issue. It is one of the worst things in HP Canon for being explained. I mean are we expected that Dumbledore is this all good person and condones slavery? I really didn't want it to keep coming back to the story so I needed to give Hermione a reason to tone down her attacks.

If I butchered the french I used, feel free to correct me. I used an online translator.

Chapter 18

"How did you get the Dursleys out of the house for the day?" Harry asked Remus. He, his bondmates, Remus and the twins were all in Dumbledore's office waiting before taking a portkey to Privet Drive. The twins had been stunned that Dumbledore himself was allowing this venture to happen.

"That was the first prank of the day Harry." Remus answered with a grin. "You know about the Channel Tunnel, the new tunnel to the continent?"

"Uncle Vernon was making a huge deal about how much it cost last summer when it opened. Said it was a waste of ten billion pounds or something like that."

"Well he had no problem about winning a contest for a free day trip through it." Remus said and then continued. "Limousine service to the station, with a promise of another Limousine on the other side for a quick tour before the return trip."

"Doesn't sound much like a prank to me." Hermione said, listening in, "Sounds like they got a great deal."

"Well you'd be right if," Remus left that word hang for a couple of seconds as everyone moved a little closer to listen, "their tickets were real. When they get to the terminal and present their tickets, they are going to be in for a rude shock. The Limo driver is a fellow werewolf doing me a favor. He will disappear as soon as the Dursley's are out of the car, so not only will they not get their trip, but they will have to find their own way back home, which means paying for train fare back." He looked at his watch. "They should have left about ten minutes ago, and we should have a bit of time before they return."

Dumbledore handed Remus two ropes, one for getting to the Dursley's and another to return. Each was spelled to a different keyword. A dizzying few moments later for the assortment of witches and wizards and they found themselves sprawled out in the back garden of number Four Privet Drive.

Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione who had all seen Harry's memories of this place immediately felt anger toward the residence. A sense of

loathsome resonated in their minds at the house and anyone who lived there besides Harry. A quick "alohomora" from Remus and the back door was opened.

"Now remember, we are looking for ways to make the people who live here experience a series of unpleasant occurrences without evidence of magic being used." He turned to look at everyone with a smile, "At least to start with. Ok Harry, why don't you give us a walk through, explaining a typical day of your Aunt and Uncle, what rooms are what, and any special areas that might hold interest. Also if there is anything that your Aunt and Uncle really hate."

Harry explained that a morning without him around and with Dudley away at Smelting would probably have Aunt Petunia making breakfast and later joined by Uncle Vernon who would have showered and dressed before coming down. During breakfast Uncle Vernon would read the newspaper and afterwards he would head off to work in his car. Petunia would spend the morning cleaning, and the afternoon watching TV interrupted with periods of spying on some neighbors while gossiping with others. In the evening there would be dinner and then most evenings they camp in front of the TV for further entertainment.

He walked them through the house including the kitchen, dining room and living room; upstairs they toured all the bedrooms including Harry's, which was incredibly bare compared to the rest of the house. Hermione noticed the lock on his bedroom door faced outward, instead of inward and the cat flap that was cut into the door. A raised eyebrow asked the question and a shrug of Harry's shoulder answered it. "You saw most of it, but they didn't this past summer. They were too afraid of Sirius." He said to her.

" 'Arry may I look?" Fleur said and looking over he could see her near the cupboard under the stairs when they had returned back downstairs. "If you don't wish me to I won't."

"No secrets right? I guess you've already seen it anyway." Harry replied hesitantly, "Just don't say anything about it please."

"Ze only shame zis cupboard 'olds is for zose..zose gross cochons." Fleur exclaimed.

Hermione and Gabrielle both felt the emotions from Harry and looked over at him; they followed his gaze to Fleur and could see where she was standing. They both walked over to stand near Fleur and looked at Harry who just gave them both a mental nod and he turned to lead the twins and Remus back into the kitchen for a closer look.

Harry could feel the anger from all of his bond mates as they saw the room they had witnessed in the bondimage and he knew that if his Aunt and Uncle were to walk back in the door at this moment, three very irate witches would hex them to pieces regardless of the consequences.

Remus picked up the frying pan and pulling out his wand he mutter a quick spell. "Well that's something small to start with." He said.

"What did you do?" Harry asked.

"Oh, just a heat dampening spell on all but the dead center of the pan." Remus explained. "Cooking eggs and bacon will never be the same for her. Most of it will cook slowly but anything right in the middle will burn."

Harry opened one of the cabinets and grabbed the cake pan, "Can you do this one also?" He asked. "She always makes a cake to take to the neighbor every couple of weeks. Mrs. Ellison can't bake very well and Aunt Petunia never misses a chance to show her up."

Remus took the pan and cast the same spell on it and Harry put it back away. Then Remus looked at the table. "How much does your Uncle weigh?"

"At least twenty stones." Harry replied. "Maybe a lot more."

"Excellent." Remus said, and he tapped his wand on each of the chair and muttered something that sounded like 'Adficio' to Harry. Remus looked up and said, "I weakened the chairs so if he sits in any of them they should collapse after a while."

Harry smiled as he imagined his Uncle plopping down heavily in a chair and having it crumble under him.

The twins were looking in the Refrigerator and the cabinets and both were grinning very broadly.

"You two look like you have some ideas." Harry said.

"Many, but we need to try a few things first. Does your Aunt by any chance hate it when cabinet doors are left open?" Fred asked.

"She can't stand it, and of course when I'm here I'm always responsible."

Fred looked at George, "We think we can make their lives a little interesting."

Harry knew the twins idea of interesting wasn't something his Aunt and Uncle were going to appreciate.

The girls had finished their inspection of the minute habitat Harry had spent a good portion of his early life living in and were looking over the living room. They noticed all the pictures of the Dursleys, especially of the overgrown whale Dudley, but not a single picture of Harry existed in the room, nor did they even remember one being in the house at all. Silently their frustrations and anger were being discussed. Hermione continued to look around the room and her eyes fell upon the television.

"Harry did you say your Aunt and Uncle have favorite TV shows?" Hermione called out.

"Definitely. Aunt Petunia has several in the afternoon she watches and they spend a lot of time watching TV in the evenings." Harry said as he walked into the room. "Did you have anything in mind?"

By now everyone else had joined the girls in the living room, "Well at home one of the most frustrating things to ever happen to me was when power went out when there was only ten minutes left in a show I was watching and I ended up missing the ending. It didn't televise again until I was back at Hogwarts and my parents absolutely cannot program a VCR to save their lives. I still haven't seen the end of it."

The Delacours and Weasley twins did not understand most of what Hermione had just explained, and seeing that she explained further.

"The TV shows stories in moving pictures, but the shows are chosen by another company that sends them to the TV. The shows usually are not shown again for some months later if ever. Now think of it as reading a book, and you get near the end and find out the last thirty pages are missing. That's what it's like not being able to see the last ten or so minutes of a TV show. Now presume the bookstore will not have a replacement book for months so you have to wait that long to find out what happens."

Fleur looked at Hermione and smiled, "So zis is ze zing your TV who comes on?"

"Yes. At my house will need one of these, a VCR, a very large bowl of popcorn and a bunch of rented Dr. Who tapes." Hermione replied smiling at her bond sister. She then remembered her parents. "I really hope my parents are polite to you."

"I'm sure eet will be fine." Fleur replied. "Your muzzer said she supported your decision."

"Ok, that sounds great, but can we get back to the reason we're here?" Remus asked.

"Dad says these things have problem with magic." Fred said.

"Everything that runs off electricity has problems with magic." Remus said.

George looked at Fred, "Think if we modify time tape it would work?"

"It might. Definitely something we can work on."

"Time tape?" Harry asked.

"We invented prank tape that stops working after so much time." George explained.

"Someone uses it to fix something, and after ever how long you spell the tape for, it completely stops sticking." Fred explained.

"The tape has magical properties that we might be able to activate according to a certain time schedule. It will also blend into a muggle environment so they would never notice it."

"So if the magic activates near a TV it should make it stop working for whatever duration you want." Fred finished.

Hermione was looking at the back of the TV. "Will it disrupt the TV signal, and not the TV? She held up a black cable. They have cable TV."

"What's that?" George asked.

"The TV signal or how the shows are sent to the TV doesn't come through the air here, it's sent down through this cable. The usually get more channels and it's not affected by weather." Hermione explained. "I think it would be more frustrating if the TV signal dies. Nothing like grey fuzz displaying on a TV screen."

"We can try it, if it doesn't work on the cable, we can put it on the TV itself."

Remus looked at his watch, "Do we need to see anything else?"

"What about outside?" Gabrielle asked quietly. "Ees zere anything we can do zere?"

"Well if you can make the grass die." Harry said jokily, "Having the greenest lawn on the street is one of Uncle Vernon's major goals in the summer. As long as he can make me do it that is."

"It's an idea." Remus said. "Does he put fertilizer or anything on it?"

"Yes, several times a year."

"Something else we can look into." Remus said, "Anything else?"

"What about the car?" Harry asked.

"Maybe we can ask Dad how to randomly disable a car." Fred said.

"Yeah, I bet he would know." George said.

Harry could just imagine Uncle Vernon's car not starting in the morning as he's trying to get to work and he started smiling imagining the purple face already.

"Let's take a quick peek in the garage." Remus said. When they entered the detached building a minute later, Fred saw a set of golf clubs in one corner and nudged George. They walked over and examined the set.

"Your uncle plays golf Harry?" He asked.

Harry knew that golf balls were commonly used in Quidditch practice so wasn't surprised that the Twins knew about the game.

"Yeah, he takes clients out to golf to close deals sometimes."

Fred turned to George, "Wish we had some of those golf balls Dad was talking about last year."

George looked at Harry, "Yeah they were bewitched to fly perfectly straight and go a lot further than normal."

"What's the catch?" Harry asked. "Sounds like something my Uncle would want."

"When the balls land they vanish." Fred explained. "Golfer thinks that hit the most perfect shot of their life, but when they get to where their ball should be its not there. Dad said there was one golfer who refused to give up looking for his ball. He supposedly held up the whole golf course for hours ranting and raving." (A/N: I think I owned a set of these Golf Balls. Perfect drives right down the middle of the fairway, just to vanish.)

Remus walked over to them. "Anything we can do to the clubs?" He asked.

"He had these clubs custom made for himself." Harry said. "I remember him coming home with them saying they were all a half inch longer than normal length. I remember that specifically because one of Dudley's friends joked to another that he needed the extra length to get over his stomach."

"Hmmm." Remus thought as he looked at the club. Tapping it with his wand he said "Reducio." And the club shaft reduced in size slightly. "Well, I guess he won't have that extra length the next time

he heads out." He said and proceeded to adjust the rest of the clubs in the same way.

They all perused the rest of the garage, noticing the lawn mower and other garden tools. They also opened the car and examined it in detail.

"Well there is something I can do the car now." Remus said. "Harry can you open the bonnet?" When Harry did as requested, everyone was looking at the thing that makes a car go. Remus put his wand on the battery and held it there for a couple of minutes. "There that should have drained it." He said after time. He then turned back to Harry. "What his keys? Did he leave them?"

"I thought I saw them on the hook next to the door."

"Grab them real quick and we'll lock them in the car." Remus said. "I know where not doing much yet, but this was only suppose to be a information gathering expedition." Once Harry grabbed the keys, Remus first used his wand to alter the notches on the ignition key slightly then putting the keys into the slot, he closed and locked the car doors.

Finally they went back inside and gave it one more look over. Finally Remus looked at his watch and declared time was running short. "Everyone has seen what they want to see?" When everyone nodded, "Ok, then get close to me, I'm going to cast a cleanup spell. It'll remove all traces of us being here."

"Like fingerprints and stuff?" Hermione asked.

"Should clean up everything."

But the word fingerprints had put Hermione's mind to work, and an idea and a plan came to mind. "Harry, what would your Aunt and Uncle do if after being conned away from their home, came back to find the front door ajar?" Hermione asked.

"They'd call the police, thinking they'd been robbed." Harry replied.

"And the police would probably examine the whole house thoroughly?"

"Yeah."

"Is there anything we can leave behind for the police to find?" Hermione asked everyone. "Something that might be embarrassing or slightly illegal?" to Harry she continued "And they would have to explain a reversed keyed lock and a cat flap on a bedroom door."

That made Harry think of something else. "Speaking of leaving things out." He said and rushed back up the stairs. He quickly made his way to Dudley's room. He knew of a particular loose floorboard and wanted to make sure anyone searching the room would find it as well. He pried it up and quickly made sure Dudley's stash of adult magazines were still hidden there, before he could put the board back a voice said. "What does 'e 'ide zere?"

"Uh...nothing just..." Harry cheeks turned red as Fleur walked over and pulled one of the magazines out of the hiding spot.

"Why are you embarrassed 'Arry?"

"It's..well." Harry stammered.

Fleur looked at her bond mate and smiled. "Eets nothing to be embarrassed about 'Arry." Looking to make sure no one else had followed them she leaned over and gave Harry a small kiss on his lips. "Are your bond mates as pretty as she is?" Fleur nodded at the cover of the magazine.

"More beautiful by far." He replied honestly as his eyes were looking into Fleur's.

"What about our bodies?" Fleur asked silently.

"I...I guess so." Harry replied nervously, "I mean you're very attractive and..."

"We've been bonded zis long and you've never peeked?" Fleur asked smiling.

"Peeked?"

"I stand in front of a mirror undressed every morning after my shower 'Arry and you can see what I see." Fleur said.

"but I wouldn't..."

"I wouldn't mind 'Arry, none of us would." Fleur said, putting the magazine back in the floorboard. "I don't mean to embarrass you. You're a special man 'Arry Potter and I love you. " Fleur caressed Harry's cheek as the love she felt for him radiated in her eyes. After a few seconds of staring into those emerald eyes she said "Let's go back downstairs and see what zey've figured out."

Harry replaced the floorboard but left a corner sticking up. As they were headed to the door Harry had a thought, "Does that mean you've peeked?"

Fleur turned a mischievous grin toward her bond mate. "Once or twice.....a day. And you are very very 'andsome my love." Fleur winked at Harry and started for the steps and then came up short as she thought of the scantily clad woman on the magazine cover. "I 'ave an idea." She turned around and went into Harry's Aunt and Uncle's room. She pulled open a couple of drawers until she found his Aunt's lingerie, "mmm.." She pulled out a pair of knickers and and a bra, laying them on the bed she pulled out her wand. "Engogio." And the undergarments swelled several sizes. She then changed them into a bright red color. Fleur looked at Harry, "Which side of the bed is your Uncle's?" and when he pointed, she opened the drawer of the bed table and stuck the lingerie in it. Turning to Harry, "Now what will your Aunt zink when she finds ladies underwear in your uncle's drawer zat don't fit 'er?" She grinned at Harry and sent him an image of herself in her underwear to him. Before he could react, she raced down the steps.

Remus and the twins were trying figure out why Harry was blushing when he followed shortly afterwards. "Just making sure my cousin's adult magazine collection is easily found." He said. "My Aunt will love finding it the next time she cleans."

Fred turned to George, "He never tells us about the good stuff."

"And we thought he was a good friend. Maybe she should take one more look in that room." George replied and they had started for the steps when Remus stopped them.

"As much as I'm sure you would appreciate perusing an in-depth female anatomy class workbook, I think you can forgo it this time." He said and then turning to Harry "While you were upstairs, we decided that though Hermione's idea has a lot of merit for the future, we should not do it this trip."

"Why?"

"If they think they've been robbed, they might increase their security and make it more difficult for me to get back in to implement whatever we come up with."

"Makes sense." Harry agreed.

"Of course, that's not to say it won't happen in the future." Remus explained. "But for now, let's just leave the few surprises we have, regroup with further ideas and come back." Remus cast the cleanup spell and when everyone was touching the rope, he activated the portkey.

"Did everything go satisfactory?" The Headmaster asked as the group disentangled themselves and stood up.

"We think we have enough to work on, plus we left a few surprises for them today, nothing serious...Yet." Remus replied.

"Excellent." Dumbledore replied. "Now it's lunchtime, and afterwards I do believe you wished me to assist you in another task?"

Harry remembered the rune in the Chamber. "Yes sir."

"Very well. I've been thinking about what that might mean and I have an idea. Remus if you will come get me when you're ready, I shall make myself available."

As they were all leaving the Headmaster's office, Harry was curious about something. "Why did you two stop pestering me about Padfoot and Wormtail?" Harry asked the twins. After he originally had told them about his father being Prongs, they had asked Harry several times about the last two Marauders, but each time Harry had put them off. Finally the queries just stopped.

Fred looked at George, "We sort of figured it out Harry." Fred said. "And we realized why you didn't want to talk about it."

"We didn't know it was a Marauder who betrayed your parents Harry," George continued, "or ended up killing the other Marauder."

"But just too finally put it to rest, is Sirius Black Wormtail?" Fred asked. "Seems like a fitting moniker of the person who betrayed your parents."

Harry looked at the twins in surprise. "How'd you do it? Find out who they were, I mean?"

George grinned at his twin brother. "You gave us enough Harry. Knowing your father was Prongs and Lupin was Moony, we distracted Filch enough to sneak in and take a look at his files."

"And it always seemed like two other names appeared anytime James Potter or Remus Lupin received detentions or other punishments, Sirius Black and Peter Pettigrew."

Harry chuckled, "I don't think people give you enough credit guys."

"And we like it that way Harry." George said. "We have the advantage when we are underestimated."

"To answer your question, Peter i..was Wormtail, and Sirius is Padfoot." Harry replied.

By then Harry and the twins had fallen behind everyone else. "Now can we ask you a question Harry?"

"What do you want to know?"

"What's going on with you and your girlfriend's sister?"

Harry looked at the two of them sharply, "What do you mean?"

"Last night at the party and all this morning she has been looking at you just like her sister does, and you've been looking at both of them the same way." Fred replied.

"We don't believe the rubbish Mum and Ron go on about, but there is something going on between you and those two." George chimed in. "And it's more than just having Gabrielle as a girlfriend."

Harry pulled up short and turned toward the twins. "Look guys, its..it's nothing. Just forget it."

"Sure." Fred said sounding a little hurt. "Look Harry, we might have spread a few rumors in our time here, all in good fun of course."

"But we have never betrayed a friend." George continued.

Harry studied the two redheads in front of him, "And no matter what I say, you'll not let it go until you are satisfied?"

"If you really want us to we will." Fred said. "But if we noticed, other people will also."

"And if there really is something you're trying to hide, having two people who happen to be very good at misinformation might help you." George continued.

"OK, I'm not saying whether you're right or wrong, but for now let it go. Please."

The twins both nodded, "Sure."

"One other thing guys." Harry said. "Moody asked me to loan him the Marauder's map a couple of months ago. Since without his help I would have been caught by Snape out after curfew, I really couldn't refuse. Now I really would like it back. Can you two, in all of your deviousness think of a way to get it?"

"Breaking into Moody's office isn't a good idea." George replied.

"No telling what traps he might have in there." Fred agreed.

"We'll put our heads together, but it sounds like a difficult task." George said.

"Have you thought about asking for it back?" Fred asked.

"Not really, but what would I say? You monitoring security of the castle isn't as important as me having my map back? Especially since my name got put in the cup by Merlin knows who and you think they might be trying to get me killed?"

"Yeah, does sound a little weak when you put it that way." George agreed. "Is there any reason you need the map? Anything we can help you with?"

"Thanks guys." Harry said, "But not yet."

At lunch the twins agreed to meet back up with everyone the following weekend. Remus would be out of the picture for most of the week due to the full moon due in three days. When lunch was over Professor Dumbledore joined the rest of the party (minus the twins) and descended into the Chamber.

As they gathered around the feet of the statue of Salazar Slytherin, Dumbledore gazed at the Rune, and pulled out his wand and started casting several detection spells. He frowned a couple of times at something that no one else could determine. Finally he turned to Harry.

"Harry, I would like for you to request it to open, but immediately move backward quickly." Dumbledore said. "I can't detect any traps, but I also could not detect the door upstairs. Everyone else, please have your wands out and be prepared for anything that might happen."

Harry moved closer to the Rune, with one last sideways glance at the Headmaster, he said "§Open§" and immediately jumped back as a rectangular square of the rock swung inward as if on a hinge. The opening it left was six feet high and three feet wide. It was a door and there was only darkness behind it.

Professor Dumbledore cast the same kind of light spell he had for the chamber and waited. When nothing happened he moved forward to examine the opening. Unable to keep his own curiosity at bay, Harry moved forward to look as well. Through the doorway all he could make out was a carved out room with nothing in it.

Dumbledore, Sirius and Remus had all stepped through the door and Harry followed shortly behind them. The room they stepped into

was barren. It had a ramp like tunnel that led off to one side, a quick glance at it seemed to suggest curved and it went upward. Directly on the other side of the room was a regular ordinary wooden door attached to a stone archway. The stones of the archway seemed to consist of intertwined snakes. By now Hermione, Fleur and Gabrielle had entered the room and all were taking in what they saw.

Professor Dumbledore was examining the door, while Sirius and Remus moved toward the ramp.

"Harry, I am most curious about this door." Professor Dumbledore said.

"What do you think it is?" Harry asked.

"Possibly Salazar's private study or similar, but more importantly, I am positive Tom Riddle has been in here."

Hearing the name of the student who became Lord Voldemort brought Harry's attention to full on Dumbledore. "What makes you certain?"

"Because he set a new command to open the entrance for the Basilisk. Or at least that is my belief." Dumbledore explained, and then continued. "Earlier when I was looking at the statue, I remembered what you said his command was to open the mouth and release the Basilisk. Do you remember what you told me he said?"

"Yeah, uh something like, speak to me Slytherin. Greatest of the Hogwarts four."

"Exactly Harry. Now does that sound like something Salazar himself would say to his own statue? Or something Tom Riddle would say?"

"Well Tom I suppose, but doesn't that mean he just was in the Chamber? It doesn't mean he actually came in here did it?"

"Excellent question Harry." Dumbledore said looking at Harry over his half moon glasses. "But in this case I think it does. I don't think even the cleverness of Tom Riddle at sixteen could have overcome the magic of Salazar Slytherin without some guidance. Unless I am mistaken, there must be some well, for lack of a better word, guide

for the chamber here somewhere. Now may I ask you and the ladies to stand back away from the door? I don't think this door will have any traps, in fact I doubt it very seriously, but it's always better to be safe than sorry."

Harry and his bond mates moved away from the door. Harry made sure he positioned himself in front of Gabrielle just in case. They watch Professor Dumbledore tap the door with his wand and the door opened immediately. Again he waited a few moments before casting a light spell and once the room was lit, they saw him enter. Harry immediately started forward. When he looked in the room, the first thing he saw was books, and so was the second. The room was fairly large and two complete walls were nothing but bookshelves. Harry heard a gasp beside him and knew Hermione was there.

"As much as I know you're eager to examine this room like I am." Professor Dumbledore said. "I would request you allow me this evening to examine this and the other rooms." He nodded at two other doors that Harry had yet to notice. Professor Dumbledore noticed the look of disappointment on their faces, "I am more than certain that all of you can take care of your selves, but these volumes are over a thousand years old. The slightest misstep might cause irreversible harm. Can you go see what Remus and Sirius might have discovered?"

Harry was annoyed that he was being sent away like a disobedient child, but he did realize why. "Yes sir." While the Headmaster had been speaking Hermione had walked over to a small desk and was looking at what appeared to be a handwritten journal of some sort.

"Sir." She said. "What is a Horcrux?"

Dumbledore's eyes snapped toward her quicker than either had ever seen the Headmaster react. "Why? Where did you hear that word?"

"It's written here sir." She said pointing down at the journal. Before she had even finished the sentence Albus Dumbledore had the journal in his hand flipping page after page. Looking up finally he saw four sets of eyes all looking at him, "Yes..yes. I think you need to go look after Sirius and Remus now." His tone left no room for questions or arguments. Harry and the girls all left Salazar's library with only a few glances back.

They met Sirius and Remus as they were coming back down the ramp.

"Nothing much up there, a lot of bones, and two more snake skins." Sirius said. "Damn near jumped out of my own skin when we walked into a room and the skin was lying there."

"Your reflexes are sure getting better." Remus replied smirking and then turning to Harry. "He stunned the skin before I even had my wand ready. What about you? Anything interesting behind the door?"

"A library of some sort." Hermione said with a wistful look on her face. "Professor Dumbledore said we couldn't go back in there until tomorrow."

" 'Ave any idea what a 'orcrux is?" Fleur asked Remus.

Remus thought about it for a while. "No, can't say I've ever come across that term. Why do you ask?"

" 'Ermione saw the word in a journal in zat library and your 'eadmaster almost snatched ze journal from under 'er nose." She explained.

"I'm sure it meant something to him." Remus said. "I'll go see if I can assist him and maybe we can get you back in there quicker. For now though, why don't you start telling Sirius about our morning."

Sirius, Harry and the girls were situated around the table and shortly Remus joined them. "He's not letting anyone be in that room. He is definitely studying some kind of journal."

The six of them started discussing the Dursley's home and the little things they did and started planning on some more elaborate possibilities. Several hours later, Dumbledore came out of the room behind the statue carrying several books. He assured them that the rooms were safe, but once again requested that they did not touch any of the books until they have had a chance at being protected. He made himself a portkey to transport himself directly to his office and disappeared.

Hermione was the first back in the library and the first thing she noticed was the journal she had seen previously was gone along with the books that had been on the desk with it. She had a nagging feeling that whatever a Horcrux was, it was something Professor Dumbledore considered to be extremely important.

The one of other doors led to a bed chamber, while the other led to some kind of potions work bench. The potions area garnered most of Fleur's attention. She looked longingly at the books that were in there, but per the Headmaster's request, did not touch them.

After an hour of exploring they finally lost some of their interest and realized they had studying to do. As they left the room, Harry remembered there was no bathroom. He suggested maybe they all should head up for Dinner. An idea came to him.

"What about a tent?" He said.

"What about a tent Harry?" Sirius asked.

"When we were at the World Cup we stayed in tents that were magically larger and had bathrooms and kitchens." Harry explained. "Why don't we get one for you to have down here? It's got to be better than how you're living now."

Remus looked at Sirius. "That's not a bad idea. I think I'll follow them up and put an order in for one of those as well."

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Late that night, Dumbledore sat behind his large desk rereading the journal that he had found in Salazar's library. After a while he sat back and rubbed his eyes and he turned to Fawkes with a look of profound sadness. "As much as it saddens me to say it, I was right about that diary confirming my suspicions old friend. Tom was researching Horcruxes." Dumbledore picked up one of the books that had been near the journal, a book from Salazar's personal library. It detailed the workings of creating a horcrux. "What's more horrifying though is that he was pondering the question if other wizards have created Horcruxes and still died, would it be better to create more than one Horcrux to further protect himself." He leaned back thinking just how old he felt at that moment. He looked down

again and reread the last passage written by Tom Riddle all those years ago.

"...but how many Horcruxes? To insure my continued survival the more I can make would be the better, but what of the magical properties of numbers? Would it be better to have my soul divided into a particular strong magical number of parts? Wouldn't that insure a stronger soul than a single one?"

Dumbledore looked again at the date on the journal entry. June 10th, 1943. He had checked the dates of what happened that year when Harry had explained about the diary. Riddle had accused Hagrid on the 13th of that month.

"And Tom was afraid to go back to the Chamber after that because I was keeping an eye on him." Dumbledore thought remembering again what Harry had said two years ago. "I never gave him a chance to finish his thoughts in his journal. But if he had returned, this journal would probably not still been there." His thoughts turned to Arithmancy, "If he did divide his soul into parts equal to a strong magical number, what would it be? Three, seven, and thirteen all have strong magical properties. Three would be the easiest for him to accomplish, but thirteen would ensure the most safety, while seven is considered the strongest magical number to exist. Can the soul be divided thirteen times and still be considered living?"

Dumbledore's thoughts turned to Harry and a sense of hopelessness descended upon him. Two years ago when Harry showed he could speak parseltongue it confirmed to him that the young man had somehow acquired some of Riddle's powers. With the diary confirming the existence of Horcruxes he had started developing a theory on how that had happened. Now with the knowledge that Tom made more than one Horcrux and most likely made many of them, it all but confirmed that Tom's soul had been so unstable the night he tried to kill Harry, an innocent baby, that a part of it snapped off and embedded in Harry. Dumbledore had for so long hoped the prophecy could have been interpreted in some other way, but it was not to be, with Harry being a Horcrux, he would have to die before Voldemort could die.

Tears watered the Headmaster's eyes as he thought of the young man he had just seen a few hours ago. Even after the childhood he

had experienced, he had turned into a fine young man, a young man who had finally found some happiness in his life. He had found love.

"Do I tell him my suspicions? Tell him of the prophecy? To what end?" The Headmaster thought to himself. "It might be years, decades or even a lifetime before it might come true. Do I tell him and have him looking over his shoulder the rest of his life waiting for Riddle to kill him never getting to enjoy the life he has, or let him live a life free of that burden?" One final thought occurred to him, "How will Harry's death affect his bond mates? Will they themselves be condemned?" Dumbledore thought of Professor Berceau, but quickly dismissed the idea of asking her. "I can't ask, not without questions being asked of me that I can't answer at this time."

It was sometime later before the Headmaster made his way to his bedchamber only to restlessly lay awake the whole night as three numbers kept rolling into his mind, "Three, seven, thirteen."

Chapter 19

Vernon Dursley was still fuming at the previous day. It had have been the worst day of his life. Well second worst, since he considered the day that blasted freak showed up on his doorstep to be the worst. He had been made to look like a fool in front of a lot of people. He looked down at the mess on his plate. Half cooked eggs and burnt bacon. When he complained to Petunia she had handed him the frying pan and told him to cook them himself if he wasn't happy. "She's still not happy about yesterday either." Vernon thought. "First thing tomorrow morning I'll be calling my solicitor about that contest." He thought. "I'll sue them for everything they have." He looked at the letter that had announced his victory and had had the tickets and instructions in it. "Whoever this Black Moon promotional company is, they've picked the wrong man to try some stunt like this on." Vernon looked back down at his breakfast and started pushing the food around on his plate looking for something edible. The scraping of his fork hid the first sound of creaking coming from his chair; the second sound was a loud crack as the chair collapsed under him. Vernon's hands reached for anything he could as he felt the pull of gravity that the chair had been keeping at bay and the hands grabbed his breakfast plate. The plate of half cooked eggs was pulled down and the plate, eggs, and bacon along with the grease landed on several of Vernon's chins along with his face.

"PETUNIA!" Vernon screamed from his prone position amidst the remains of his chair as his entire backside felt like it was on fire.

Petunia Dursley found her husband lying in the remains of a kitchen chair on the floor covered in his breakfast. It took her an hour to get him up the steps to the bedroom where he stayed for the next two days with a sore back and arse.

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During the next few days Harry and his bond mates only ventured into the Chamber to make sure Moony had his wolfsbane potion. Remus had requested the time without them so he could rest a day before the full moon and another couple of days recovering. On more than one occasion during that time, Hermione and Fleur hauled their bond mate into Fleur and Gabrielle's room in the Beauxbaton carriage to ensure equal snogging time with Harry that

they normally had when in the Chamber. One of those occasions happened when Gabrielle was studying with Ginny.

"It must be difficult," Ginny said to Gabrielle, "to always have your sister around you and Harry."

"Non, she's very supportive of our relationship." Gabrielle replied.

"Don't you feel self conscious when you're snogging Harry near her?"

It was at that time a smile encroached upon Gabrielle's face as she felt her sister kissing their bond mate. "Non, I'm sure she will do ze same with 'er boyfriend."

"I know when I was at the Yule Ball with Neville I felt every one of my brothers watching us." Ginny said. "I think if he had tried to kiss me, they would have all hexed him to pieces."

"If 'Arry gets too far out of 'and she might give 'im a good, what is it you say, tongue lashing." Gabrielle replied. "Like she's doing right now."

"So is Harry a good kisser?" Ginny asked. Gabrielle cocked her head questioningly at her friend to which Ginny continued. "Just girl talk Gabrielle. I know he's yours. Most witches in the castle are wondering the same thing."

"No telling all ze other witches, but 'Arry is a very very good kisser."

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"Petunia dear." Vernon said. "Where did you leave the car keys?"

"You were the last one to drive the car." Petunia replied. "So why would I know where you left them?"

"You know I always hang them up here next to the door."

"Well obviously you didn't this time. Where's the spare key?"

"You know I keep the spare key in my desk at work. Now help me find them. I'm going to be late for work and I already missed

yesterday. I've got a major appointment in two hours that I can't miss."

Twenty minutes later Vernon found his keys dangling from the ignition as he looked in through the locked door window. He called his office to have them reschedule the appointment for an hour later when the locksmith he had called reported it would take him at least an hour to get to their Surrey home.

An hour and a half later Vernon Dursley climbed into the front seat of his car after paying what he considered an exorbitant amount of money for someone to spend thirty seconds opening a car door. As he muttered under his breath at the fee he turned the key in the ignition and... 'click' he turned it again...'click'

In his rage Vernon Dursley snapped the key off in the ignition. He never made his appointment.

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Harry recognized the look Remus Lupin had. He had seen it every month the previous year, but at the time didn't recognize it for what it was.

"How are you feeling Remus?" He asked when he went down to escort the Moony out of the Chamber.

"It's never easy Harry, but at least I have Sirius again." Lupin said. "Even though I'm safe with the Wolfsbane, there is always that feeling of isolation I have when I'm a werewolf. Having Sirius around again reminds me of the times with him and your father."

"Anything we can do?" Harry asked.

"You're already doing it." Lupin replied as the two of them walked down the tunnel toward the steps. "Just being around people who accept me for who I am means so much. It's another thing that brings back memories of my student days in this school."

"Thinking about Fleur's offer?"

"I'd be a fool not too Harry, but I want to talk to her father first." Remus replied. "I don't want charity, but if they seriously could use me for something that's important, I would really like it."

"She was serious in her offer." Harry said. "And I've met her father and I know he'll listen to her. He's going to try to help Sirius when we announce our bond."

"He knows about Sirius?"

"Only that he's innocent and my Godfather." Harry replied. "He's going to ask for a full investigation of me once the bond is announced, and that should bring Sirius into the picture. Once it comes out Sirius never had a trial, he'll push for one. With Dumbledore changing his testimony that Sirius was the secret keeper they shouldn't have a case."

"I hope it's that simple, but the Minister doesn't like admitting the ministry makes mistakes." Remus said. "We'll need to make sure we have a solicitor lined up for Sirius before the trial."

They continued to converse on various subjects as they left the Chamber area.

Remus found that his tent, gloves, books and the rest of his rendering equipment had arrived in Hogsmeade. He made his way to the store and paid for and picked them up. After shrinking them down, he made his way to the local post office, where he placed several orders into post that would be converted into muggle mail. He smiled as he watched the owls fly away and thought, "Well Padfoot, your first prank against the Dursley's is underway."

The owls landed a short time later at a wizarding/muggle post conversion station where the envelopes were taken from the owls and put into the standard muggle post. A couple of days later those envelopes made their way to several magazine processing points where the order was fulfilled. Two subscriptions of magazines were placed for number Four Privet Drive, while a third was an order for the same name but for number Fourteen Privet Drive. Harry assured Sirius that neighbor was on par to his Aunt for neighborhood gossiping.

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Over the next several days they studied in the Chamber, where they were practicing learning various spells from Fleur. She would cast the spell and Harry would experience it in his mind. After he perfected the spell Gabrielle and Hermione would learn it from him the same way.

Remus was studying both French and the books on dealing with the Basilisk. One of the evenings he was standing next to the large carcass deep in thought, when Harry came over to talk to him.

"What's this thing good for Moony?" He asked.

Remus had been thinking about how and where to begin with the rendering and at Harry's question, he looked startled. "Oh, sorry Harry, lost in thought. What's it good for you ask? Well from what that book says," He nodded at the book lying open on the table, "Almost every part of this thing has value. Considering that almost all Basilisks have been killed off over the years and one hasn't been killed and harvested in almost ten years the backlog of demand for the various parts has driven up the price astronomically. The book has some numbers in it, but its two years old so you have to presume a higher price now. An example would be the venom. It's especially in high demand and two years ago it was selling for one hundred and fifty galleons an ounce."

Harry remembered the white hot pain of the Basilisk venom as it coursed through his body and he gave a slight shudder. "What's the venom used for?"

"Several things actually," Remus explained, "it's a critical ingredient in several high end potions and it's also an effective means to kill dangerous magical resistant creatures. An example given in the book is an enraged dragon that can't be controlled. You can risk several dragon handlers' lives in attempting to kill it, or less than an ounce of basilisk venom can take it down. Of course getting the venom into the dragon is dangerous in itself, but the risk is far less."

By now the others had gathered around them, "So how many ounces of venom do Basilisks have?" Hermione asked.

"Not ounces, gallons. The average Basilisk will have between four and five gallons of venom." Lupin explained.

Hermione and Fleur both did the math rapidly in their heads, "Zat's over seventy zousand galleons." Fleur said. "Just for ze venom?"

"Actually I said the average was four to five gallons." Lupin explained. "The average Basilisk is only thirty feet long. Considering this one is over sixty feet, if there is a corresponding increase in venom, you could be looking at over thirty to forty gallons based depending if the venom cavity has a corresponding increase in both diameter and length."

"What do you mean?"

"The venom sac is a cylinder like mass near it's head. A normal sac is about twenty five centimeters in diameter with a length of forty centimeters, if this one has one fifty centimeters by eighty centimeters, the volume increases to over thirty gallons. If there are thirty gallons of venom in this beast.."

"Over four hundred and fifty thousand gallons." Hermione whispered.

"Correct again. Minus, of course the amount you'll have to pay whoever you are getting to sell it for you."

Five people were shocked, but finally Sirius let out a whistle. Now he knew why Dumbledore didn't want this kind of money floating around the ministry. This basilisk alone could buy enough influence in the government to change major policies for good or bad.

"And your cut Moony." Harry reminded him. "And do not tell me it's too much, you agreed to the amount." Fleur had determined that the normal fee for rendering a magical animal down was four percent of the total value if there was no danger to the person, six percent if there was danger. Fleur and Remus had argued again about the final amount and finally agreed on eighty percent of five percent or overall a four percent of total value.

Remus had already computed that just extracting the venom was worth between three and eighteen thousand galleons, more money than he had had in a long time, and that didn't even cover the rest of the Basilisk. The rest was worth less per piece but a lot more overall. He knew he was going to have a lot of galleons when this was over.

"So what else has value?" Hermione asked.

"The fangs are pretty valuable as potion ingredients." Lupin replied. "The Goblins will also pay very handsomely for them. They like to carve them into swords. Again with these being larger than average Basilisk fangs the value increases exponentially. Then there's the skin. It's extremely resistant to magic but in a special way that it absorbs magic instead of reflecting it like dragon skin does. Well to do families and businesses will line a room with the material to have a magical training room."

"Can it be used like dragon skin to protect you?" Harry asked thinking of Hagrid mentioning he might need dragon hide to line his robes with.

"If you're a giant maybe." Remus said.

"What does that mean?" Hermione asked.

Remus went into the tent that had been set up in a corner and brought back a small piece of what they recognized as Basilisk skin. "Fleur helped me cut this off the skin in the tunnel yesterday." He handed it to Hermione who almost dropped it because she hadn't expected it to be so heavy. "Heavy isn't it?" Lupin asked. "Basilisk skin weights about twenty kilos for every square meter. It would be too heavy to wear for any length of time and if you're an Auror having to face the killing curse on occasion, moving quickly is very important."

"Can't it be lightened with a spell?" Hermione asked.

Remus looked at her and smiled. He mentally counted and when he reached four he saw Hermione's eyes reflect the answer he knew she would get.

"If it could be magically lightened, it wouldn't be resistant to magic." She answered her own question.

"Exactly." Her old defense professor exclaimed. "Dragon skin is naturally light or the Dragon would never be able to fly, but Basilisks never developed a need to have lighter skin."

" 'Ow much is the skin worth?" Fleur asked.

"Depends on the usage. Selling it as it is, about a thousand galleons per square meter." Remus said. "But believe it or not there is a market for basilisk skin in the fashion industry. With the right potions the skin can be broken down into layers which does lighten it. It takes about three years of continuous soaking and the skin loses all of its magical protection but you end up with five times the amount of skin you started with. People pay a lot for Basilisk skin boots, robes and other articles of clothing. You can make more money by selling some of it that way, but since they get five times the amount in return they don't need as much."

Hermione had been mentally calculating the surface area of the Basilisk, and came out with about two hundred and fifty square meters. At a thousand galleons per square meter the skin alone was going to bring in another two hundred and fifty thousand galleons.

Remus saw the look in her eyes and asked. "Did the math?" and when she nodded, he asked, "Did you remember there are three other skins to be harvested as well? The one in the tunnel and Sirius and I found two more up in the statue area. They are all smaller, but still a lot of skin."

"How much are you talking about for the Basilisk in its entirety?" Hermione asked as she thought about the enormity of the amount it was already at.

"If the internal organs are still intact, you're probably looking at somewhere between two and three million galleons. With a good seller who knows the market, maybe a lot more. Remember that I'm using numbers from a book that's a couple of years old."

Harry had never really cared about money, he knew he had more than the Weasley's and it often made him feel bad about having more than they did. But even he knew this was a lot of galleons. What was he going to do with two million galleons?

"I wanted to give some of it to the Weasley's." He said.

"You can't give them that much Harry." Sirius said.

"Why not?"

"Arthur is a Ministry employee. He has to report any amount of money above ten thousand Galleons given to his family." Sirius explained. "It's one of the ways that corruption is suppose to be kept out of the government."

Fleur snorted at that comment. "But eet happens anyway. Just ze 'onest ones can't take money for good reasons while ze dishonest officals 'ave it given to zem zrough various means to disguise it."

"I'm not arguing with you Fleur." Sirius said. "That's exactly what happens. But If Harry gives them more than ten thousand galleons Arthur will have to report it, and Harry will have to explain where it came from. If he does that, Fudge will be demanding all of the money from the Basilisk go to the Ministry."

"I'll talk to Mr. Weasley about it when I see him." Harry said. "No, not I, we need to talk to him after we figure out what we would like to give them. This money will belong to all of us."

"Harry, I can't take part of that fortune." Hermione said. "It's yours."

"I thought we were a family Hermione." Harry said. "If we are, then there is no me when it comes to things like this, it is only us."

"Of course we're your family, but..." Hermione stopped and then started again. "Fine, just remember that I loved you before you were rich."

Harry smiled at her, "Of course love, but you three ladies made me rich long before the thought of these galleons came into our lives." He looked at Fleur and Gabrielle, "And no complaints from you two either."

" 'Arry, as long as we 'ave you, anything else is not important." Fleur replied.

"I hope you three have a clue with what do with all of this money." Harry said. "I don't."

"Once ze galleons exist, we can ask Papa to recommend a good financial adviser." Fleur replied.

Sirius turned to Remus faking a frown, "I guess he doesn't need me anymore. I mean who wants a mangy old mutt around when he's got those ladies to spoil him."

"Hmm." Remus pretended to think hard on the subject, "Mangy mutt or three beautiful ladies, tough one there Padfoot, but I'll have to agree. If I was in his shoes I'd go with the women also."

"Shut it you two." Harry said blushing. "My family will always have room for the mangy mutt as you call yourself."

Sirius transformed into his animagus form and started bounding around the chamber.

A couple of minutes later all of the bond mates started laughing. Remus looked over at them with a questioning look.

"Hermione said we can only keep him if he's housebroken." Harry replied to the unspoken question.

"But it was Fleur who said we might have to have him neutered." Hermione said. This caused Sirius to transform back and give Fleur a pitiful look causing them all to break down laughing again.

Later when Harry and the girls had left, Remus looked at Sirius, "Almost word for word what Lily said wasn't it."

"Yep." Sirius replied to his friend. "I just want to know why women immediately think of neutering."

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Vernon Dursley had had a horrible week. Between the kitchen chair collapsing, being laid up for a couple of days, the key being locked in the car and then having to pay for a locksmith, a new battery and having the key piece removed from the ignition, not to mention the hired car he had to get, it had to have been one of the worst weeks of his life. He'd even heard back from his solicitor this morning only to find out there was no company called Black Moon promotional company and the only avenue Vernon had was to turn it over to the police. To top it all off the customer he was suppose to have met with the day he had issues with his car had notified him this afternoon that he had taken his business to another drill company.

All Vernon Dursley wanted to do was to get home, have a nice stiff drink and relax for the whole weekend and forget this bloody week ever happened. He knew when he got to work on Monday his boss would be giving him a right bollocking for the loss of an important customer but he would worry about that on Monday.

After he pulled into the garage and double checked he had his keys, he walked into his front door, only to find Petunia standing inside the doorway holding a set of red undergarments in her hands. Vernon Dursley's weekend wasn't as relaxing as he had hoped, especially since he spent the entire weekend trying to explain something he had no explanation for. He ended up sleeping on the couch for several nights. It also didn't help when a second kitchen chair collapsed under his weight, and Petunia refused to help him. He lay on the kitchen floor for an hour while Petunia went about her daily activities, even going as far as to step over him as she did her cleaning. He eventually crawled to the couch which wasn't very soothing to a bad back.

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Harry had seen the Twins a few times since the conversation the previous week, but the Twins had not brought the subject of Fleur back up. Harry and his bond mates had discuss the possibility of telling them but were still undecided. They trusted the two, but they all knew the more people who know a secret the more chance of it getting out. It was after a prank review session with Remus, where the Twins were pretty sure they had modified their time tape to work as needed, that they decided to let them in on the secret.

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April first was appropriately the Twins' birthday. Lee Jordan and the rest of the Twins' friends threw them a tremendous party in the common room. Hermione gave them a book of muggle jokes and pranks, while Fleur and Gabrielle had asked their mother to pick up items at a French joke shop that weren't available at Zonkos. When all the gifts had been opened, Harry handed the twins two envelopes, one from him and one from Remus. Harry's had two sentences written on a letter inside. "Time to tell you the secret you wanted to know. Tomorrow after dinner." When the twins read the letter they looked over at Harry and nodded as they grinned at him. Remus's letter also had a couple of lines. "Now that you are seventeen, I

invite you to join me for a return visit to number Four Privet Drive this weekend. " This brought an even bigger grin. They were going to get to do magic legally outside of the Burrow or Hogwarts, while doing what they loved to do most.

The next evening, Harry and Hermione fell into step beside the twins. Fleur and Gabrielle were already in the Chamber making sure that Sirius was in his animagus form.

"Well are you two ready to learn our secrets." Harry asked as he led them to Myrtle's bathroom.

"Of course Harry." George said.

"You know we would never...hey why are we going into a girls bathroom." Fred said. Both of the twins looked around the loo expecting some sort of a prank.

Harry grinned. "Where else would you hide the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets guys, and where else would it be appropriate to tell you the secret except in the Chamber of Secrets."

"Cool."

"We always did want to go down there."

"But Ron and Ginny wouldn't tell us where it was."

"You couldn't get in anyway." Harry explained. "Unless you are a Parselmouth." He turned to the wall and hissed, "§Open§" and the wall section disappeared.

Fred looked at George. "The great Chamber of Secrets of Salazar Slytherin is in a Girl's bathroom?"

"And I guess we can't rub the Slytherin's noses in it, can we?"

"Not yet." Harry said. "Besides, it wasn't a bathroom when he made it."

"So?" Fred said. "It's still nose rubbing material if I ever saw any."

A few minutes later they passed the snakeskin in the tunnel. "What the bloody hell Harry?" George asked.

"It's just a skin." He replied and continued walking while the twins kept looking back at mass of skin laying in the tunnel.

"When they got to the Chamber itself, Hermione, to the twins amazement, hissed it open and they entered.

"Hermione's a parselmouth too?" George said. "We didn't know that."

"Not really." Harry replied. "She's just good at faking it." That earned Harry a tongue stuck out at him.

In the Chamber, the twins did what everyone else did when they first enter the Chamber; stare at the carcass of the Basilisk. "That's the bloody thing that you saved Ginny from?" George asked.

"I guess. It never attack Ginny since she was already unconscious when Riddle turned it on me." Harry replied. "I had Dumbledore's Phoenix helping me though. It was a sort of memory of Voldemort that I had to kill to save Ginny." Harry said as the twins flinched at the name.

"Bloody hell." Fred said as he and George walked around the monstrous creature.

It was only after they had thoroughly looked over the carcass before they realized there was also a Hippogriff and Harry's dog in the Chamber. "Have some kind of animal farm going down here Harry?" George asked.

"Something like that."

"Where'd you get a Hippogriff?" Fred asked.

"He's a friend." Harry replied. "I really can't tell you more than that." He looked over at Fleur and Gabrielle who were seated at the table with Remus. "Now I think we said we'd tell you a secret."

"You know Harry, you don't have too." George said.

"That's not to say we don't want to know." Fred said.

"But if it is going to cause problems with your girlfriend and her sister, we'll understand."

"It's alright guys, we've been debating it for the last week or so, and we decided to tell you." Harry said. "You have a good point about misinformation, and we are hoping for one other thing from you this summer."

"Name it Harry."

"We'll explain it after the secret." Harry replied and then continued. "You know Gabrielle is my girlfriend of course."

"A lovely choice if we must say so ourselves." Fred joked.

"Is Moody covering any magical beings in your class this year?"

"No, he's pretty stuck on how constant vigilance and how to protect ourselves by causing us as much discomfort as he can."

"Yeah, same in our class. Oh well, you know Gabrielle and Fleur are Veela?" Harry asked and the twins nodded at which Harry continued. "Well they have the ability to develop a love bond with another person. It's a permanent connection between the Veela and her bond mate."

"And you and Gabrielle have this bond?" George asked.

"Yes." Harry said, and Gabrielle walked over and put her arms around him.

"So that's the big secret?" George asked, looking a little confused and disappointed. "Why is it even a secret?"

"It's part of it." Harry explained. "You asked what was going on between Fleur and I and you correctly pointed out she looked at my just like Gabrielle did. Want to guess why?"

It took the twins only a few seconds to realize the answer, but to emphasize the point, Fleur had also join Harry and Gabrielle and wrapped her arms around both of them.

"Two?" George asked.

"Veelas?" Fred chimed in.

"Sisters?"

"Yes, yes and yes." Harry said.

"Shall we bow now, or wait until we are ready to leave oh mighty one?" George panned.

"And this was the Harrikins who was having trouble approaching a girl about the Yule Ball?" Fred asked his brother.

"We are so proud." Both twins said in unison as they each wiped an imaginary tear away.

"But seriously" George said. "We really thought you would end up with Hermione."

"Yeah, we really did." Fred agreed. "I mean you two have been mostly inseparable for years."

"I guess it's time to retire that pool." George said to his brother.

"What pool?" Hermione asked.

"When you and Harry would finally get together of course." George replied.

"Were we the only two people in the whole castle who didn't realize we were supposedly going to be together?" Harry asked.

"Well if you didn't," George nodded at his brother, then looking back at Harry, "Yeah pretty much."

"So who all was in on this pool?"

"A lot of people actually, including professors." Fred replied.

"Just don't tell me Snape had a bet down."

"No, of course not. No Slytherins were invited." George said.

"Out of curiosity," Hermione asked, "Who had February twenty seventh?"

"Why?"

"Oh, just curious."

Fred reached into his robes and brought out a roll of parchment, he unrolled it and looked down the list, "We had two people for that week, Hagrid and Katie Bell."

"Well that's a problem." Hermione said as she walked over to Harry.

"Why?"

"Because you can't pay the winners without telling them they won, but we aren't telling anyone when it happened."

Fred and George looked utterly confused. "Winners, what do you mean?"

Hermione wrapped her arms around Harry, joining Fleur and Gabrielle.

"Guys, well actually I have a third bond mate, it's Hermione."

It was one of the few times anyone had made the twins speechless. Similar to Remus' reactions the jaws came down, words tried to form but nothing materialized for several seconds. A certain large black dog was jumping around barking in glee. Finally George recovered and just like Lupin he thought a fast one was being pulled on them. "Ok Harry, you got us, and we thought you were serious."

"Not a joke or a prank guys." Harry said. Then letting out a deep sigh, he looked at his bond mates, "I'm stuck with these witches for the rest of my life."

"But you said it was a Veela thing?" Fred asked. "How can Hermione...I mean she's not Veela unless we missed something along the way."

"I prefer to not go into the details, but it is Veela magic, but Hermione had the choice to join the bond and we realized what everyone else seems to have known all along, that we loved each other and she chose to join Fleur and Gabrielle in bonding with me."

This time Fred and George did drop to their knees and started bowing. "Oh mighty one, we are but unworthy humble servants in your presence."

"Oh shut up you two." Hermione said as Fleur and Gabrielle were giggling.

"That is our secret guys and I hope you can understand why we want to keep it secret." Harry explained. "We are going to announce the bond this summer, so the Prophet can finish their stories of me before school starts back up. Besides, you know Rita Skeeter is going to find some way to slant this badly."

"We understand Harry." George replied.

"Do you think you can announce your bond the last week of July or the first week of August?" Fred asked.

"Why?"

Fred smirked at his brother then turning back to Harry, "We have that time in the pool."

"We thought maybe it would be your birthday party." George said. "We had planned on pushing for you two to be at the Burrow for it."

"We'll see guys, but wouldn't that be cheating?" Harry asked.

"Cheating is such a strong word." Fred said. "Giving you love potions, or having Moody put you under the imperious curse, that would have been cheating."

"Besides the Galleons would come in handy to make our dreams come true." George said.

"Your joke shop?" Harry asked.

"We think we can do better than Zonkos." Fred said.

"I'd bet on it." Harry replied. "So you want us to help you win the pot. Didn't you already clean up at the World Cup?"

Fred and George looked at each other and their normal cheery faces lost their smiles. "Yeah, well since you've let us in on your secrets, we'll tell you one of ours. Bagman ripped us off." George said.

"Paid us off in Leprechaun Gold. It was gone by the next day." Fred said.

"We've been trying to talk to him about it, but he keeps avoiding us."

"We first thought it was an honest mistake, but we've started to think otherwise."

"Anything you can do about it?" Hermione asked.

"No real proof." George replied. "People saw him give us our Galleons."

"Besides if we make a big stink about it, mum will find out." Fred said. "And you know mum. We'd be out our Galleons and have to listen to her all this coming summer."

"Yeah, too bad mates." Harry said. "Speaking of your Mum though, that's the other thing we hope you can do for us. What do you think she's going to do when she reads Rita's slant in the Prophet of our bonding?"

"I doubt Percy will be getting any more work done at the Burrow afterwards, since there won't be a quiet moment for some time." George said.

"The only good thing is George and I won't and the end of her temper for a while."

"That's what we thought." Harry said. "Your family has been wonderful to me guys and I really don't want to lose that connection, but.." He let the sentence unfinished.

Again the twins looked at each other before George replied. "We understand Harry. I presume you want us to soften Mum up a bit before the articles appear?"

"Something like that." Hermione said.

"We zought we could get you books on our 'eritage and you can give your muzzer some facts before it 'appens." Fleur said.

"We'd be glad too." Fred said. "Out of curiosity, you wouldn't happen to have a cousin." He looked at his brother, "or two interested in two slightly odd fellows would you?"

"If we are going to learn about Veelas, practical application afterwards is always more fun."

"We do 'ave a cousin, but she is ze wrong age." Fleur said with a smile. "But come visit sometime and I'll see what I can do."

"Thanks guys, now there is one other thing we are going to tell you." Harry said. "More of clear up a misrepresentation." Harry looked over at Lupin before turning back to the twins, "Sirius Black did not betray my parents. It was Pettigrew who did."

"But Black was out to get you." George said.

"No, he was out to get Pettigrew."

"But he's dead. Black killed him." Fred replied.

"That's wrong also." Harry said. "Now this is something you cannot tell or even hint at anyone but I know you looked up to the Marauders and I didn't want you to have the wrong opinion of my Godfather."

"Your what?" George asked.

"Sirius Black, Padfoot is my Godfather." Harry said. "He is innocent, and someday I hope it will be proven and he can stop running."

"So why did he try to kill Ron last year?"

"He didn't." Harry replied. "Pettigrew was an animagus. His form was a rat. Do you happen to know of an ordinary rat who seemed to live forever?"

"You can't mean...no way...not Scabbers?" George said.

"Pettigrew was Scabbers." Harry confirmed. "Black was trying to get to him to protect me."

"How did he know?" Fred asked.

"Did you read the article last year in the prophet about Pettigrew? About what was supposedly left of him when he was killed by Sirius?"

"Only a finger I do believe."

"Was there anything peculiar about Scabbers?"

"He was missing a toe." Both twins said simultaneously.

"And your family including Scabbers was on the front page of the prophet. Sirius saw it and broke out of Azkaban to try to protect me and kill Pettigrew."

George looked at Fred, "And we had so many chances of killing him."

"True, but he did turn him pink on more than one occasion." And Fred looked at Harry. "Sorry mate, if we'd known we would've been glad to have tortured him for you."

"That's alright. I just wanted you to respect the correct Marauders." Harry said. "Right Moony?"

"I would prefer if Sirius's name wasn't thought of badly." Remus said. "Now Fred, George I do believe we have an excursion we need to make this weekend. Are you two up for it?"

"Of course, we wouldn't miss it."

"It's going to take a lot longer this time." Remus explained. "We are going to Floo to Diagon Alley and then muggle our way to Surrey

this time. We'll have to come up with something to get them out of the house so we can get in."

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Late Saturday evening Remus, Fleur and twins arrived back at the Castle and they were discussing what they had done that day.

"This bottle." Fred said holding up a standard looking bottle of clear liquid. "Holds some fun your Uncle shall experience tonight."

"What does it do?" Gabrielle asked.

"You're familiar with dreamless sleep potions?" George asked.

"Of course."

"Well this is the opposite." Fred explained,

"When a little is added to the pillowcase, it will put the person into a deep sleep and force them to dream a particular dream over and over." George continued. "and best of all it will not come out in the standard wash."

"What will he be dreaming about?" Harry asked.

"Waterfalls." George replied with an evil grin. "Lots and lots of waterfalls."

"We also added some to your cousin's bed as well."

"So every time he sleeps on that pillowcase, he will..."

"Yep." George said and everyone started laughing.

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They next morning Vernon woke to a warm, wet feeling. It had been a great night and he felt very rested. He clearly remembered the vivid peaceful waterfalls of his dreams. As he came to full consciousness he realized the cavity his weight carved out of the mattress was completely soaked along with his bedclothes and a strong smell of urine permeated the air.

"PETUNIA!"

The shower he took to clean himself off was cold. For some reason the Hot Water heater wasn't working.

I really have no clue about Snake skins and weight, so if I am wrong, just presume it's the magical properties of the Basilisk and let it go.

Thanks to LEFT HEAD for correcting my volume computations. I'm a math programming major and should have remembered the increase is eight fold for doubling dimensions.

I am going to explain the pranks on the Dursleys from here on out by starting the scene with a quote of Remus, the twins or Fleur saying what they did, which goes back to the last little meeting in this chapter. Then the actual prank which may happen sometime in the future will unfold.

Remus held up a mirror, and showed it to everyone. "This is a two way talking Mirror. The Marauders used them to talk to each other when we were in Hogwarts." The twins were looking at the mirror with pure awe in their eyes as Remus continued. "I put a Disillusionment Charm on one of the mirrors and placed it in your Relatives living room and muted this one so they can't hear us. We will only be able to see what's happening in the living room, but hopefully it will give us an idea how the pranks are working. We have someone very interested in the situation that will monitor this mirror as much as he can. Now for my first prank I transfigured two dozen buttons into rats. I put a sleep spell on them so two of them will awaken every week." Remus said. "So for the next few weeks your Aunt Petunia will have some guest to keep her company."

Petunia noticed the small black half inch long things on the floor of the kitchen but didn't think anything of it at first. She immediately got the broom and cleaned them up. Over the next couple of days she found more and more of the black cylindrical items. Finally one day she was in the kitchen making herself a cup of tea when she heard a scraping sound behind her.

Vernon Dursley could hear Petunia before he could even turn off the car after returning from work.

"VERNON! HELP! VERNON!"

He immediately rushed into the house to find his wife standing on a chair in the kitchen shouting at the top of her lungs.

"What is it Petunia dear?" Vernon asked.

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?" Petunia shouted. "I'VE BEEN ON THIS CHAIR ALL DAY."

"I've been at work like I do every day." Vernon answered. "Why are you standing on a chair?"

"RAT!" Petunia continued screaming. "WE HAVE A RAT!"

"Just a rat?" Vernon asked. "Surely you're not afraid of a rat are you Petunia dear? I'll call an exterminator in the morning and have him come take a look." Vernon quickly found out that this was exactly the wrong thing to say to his wife. Not only did he have to call an

exterminator for an after hour rat removal, but he also received no dinner since Petunia refused to move from her chair and Vernon was required to spend the two hours until the exterminator showed up looking for the rat the extermination company was going to kill.

"You know Moony," Sirius said to his friend earlier in the day as they listened to the mirror. "She's had to have been screaming for three straight hours, you'd think she'd have gotten tired of it by now."

"I think we're going to need some headache potions down here." Moony replied. "Or we will have to mute the mirror and maybe miss something."

"Maybe, but for now, those screams are music to my ears."

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"We added foolish fragrance to your Uncle's cologne." Fred said and then went on to explain. "When he first puts it on, it smells as it should, but an hour later the smell starts to change."

Vernon Dursley was driving his car into work when he started smelling an odd smell. "There must be a dairy farm around here somewhere." He thought. By the time he got to work, he was concerned that the smell had got into his car and now he couldn't get it out.

"VERNON DURSLEY!" Vernon's boss yelled a couple of hours later.

"Yes sir?" Vernon answered nervously.

"You smell Vernon. Several customers and even employees who work near you have already left the building because of the way you smell. Go home, shower and get back here as quickly as you can."

"Yes sir. I'll do that sir." Was all Vernon could say. He quickly drove back home where he showered in cold water for the second time that morning, changed clothes and put on a liberal amount of cologne to make sure the smell was gone.

The rest of his day was so unpleasant he forgot to call about having a plumber come check on his hot water heater. When he got home

that evening Petunia was again waiting for him in the living room hold two magazines that had been delivered that day.

Flashback

Petunia Dursley liked to meet the Postman when he delivered the Post. Sometimes he would have a bit of juicy gossip to share in his passing. This time as he handed her the envelopes he also passed over two plain wrapped magazines.

"I honestly didn't think Vernon would be interested in such things." The Postman said. He had seen enough return addresses and types of deliveries that he knew exactly which magazines he had just delivered.

"What do you mean?" Petunia asked.

"Oh." The postman said. "Maybe I shouldn't have said anything. Well good day Mrs. Dursley." He then strolled over to the next house leaving Petunia looking at her post. She quickly went inside and ripped the cover off of one of the magazines and saw a very buxom and very nude woman staring back at her.

"VERNON!" She screamed. Though he was nowhere near the house at the time, her husband still felt a cold shiver run down his spine that reminded him of the two morning showers.

End Flashback

"VERNON DURSLEY!" Petunia spat holding up the magazines. "WHAT ARE THESE?"

"Petunia dear, I...I have no idea." Vernon replied. Though Petunia was irate, Vernon might have had a chance to talk his way out of the situation if the doorbell hadn't rung a few minutes after a very silent dinner.

When Petunia answered the door, she found Mrs. Merriweather standing there holding a partially opened plain packaged magazine. Mrs. Merriweather immediately thrust the package into Petunia's hands. "Here. This was misaddressed. It's for your husband." The last word was more spat than spoken.

Petunia looked down and saw it was indeed addressed to Vernon Dursley, only it was addressed to fourteen Privet Drive instead.

"I'm sure there's some kind of mistake." Petunia said weakly.

Mrs. Merriweather's nose wrinkled as she said. "I'm sure there is. Please have your husband change the address of that thing immediately. I do not want his filth delivered to my house ever again." She immediately turned around and stalked off.

Petunia watched the gossipy Mrs. Merriweather disappear off of her walk and looked down at the new magazine where a man seemingly attired in some kind of rubber outfit was being restrained...
"VERNON!"

Vernon Dursley spent the next few nights on the sofa which, in light of the fact Petunia had just replaced the sheets including the pillowcases in their bedroom wasn't exactly a bad thing.

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"Arry you said your Aunt liked 'er 'ouse clean." Fleur said. "Well I placed several stains zat will come visible over time and will not come up unless you use a magical stain remover."

"We added neversun to the fertilizer bag in the garage." George said and seeing the look on Harry's face he explained. "It's the stuff Vampire use to be able to go out in sunlight. If they liberally coat themselves in it and use strong sunglasses they are safe for a while. We expect when the stuff is absorbed into the grass and plants, they will stop absorbing sunlight and die."

"The time tape works great." Fred said. "We put it everywhere."

"It did work on that black cable thingy Hermione." George continued. "We put it on both it and the TV power cable so they would both go out at different times."

"They will not have hot water at all. I put a cold charm on the pipe that comes out of it." Remus said.

"The cabinet doors in the kitchen are charmed to randomly open."

Petunia had had a very difficult morning. She still couldn't cook a decent breakfast as anything she fried kept either being undercooked or overcooked. She really couldn't figure out what was happening. The milk and eggs had been spoiled even though she had just bought them two days ago. Her husband couldn't seem to remember to close a cabinet door now and the Plumber couldn't find anything wrong with their hot water heater but agreed to replace it anyway. It would still be two days before they could have hot water again. She finally sat down on the sofa to watch her afternoon shows. Fifty minutes later she was teary eyed as her favorite character Edward was about to kiss his ex-wife's best friend's cousin whom he had secretly had a crush on for years when the TV signal was lost. "NO!" Petunia screamed.

As Petunia sat waiting for the TV signal to return she noticed a small stain on her carpet. "What has that man done now?" she muttered. "Eating in here again probably." She spent the next hour trying to get the stain up to no avail. She tried again the next day and the next. Finally after supper later in the week she turned to her husband "You destroyed out carpet in the living room with whatever you spilled in there. We have to replace it."

"But Petunia dear, we can't afford it. We've already spent a good portion of our savings on the new hot water heater and refrigerator and now the plumber is saying he might have to redo the pipes in the house if we want hot water." The look his wife was giving him made it perfectly clear that they would be getting new carpet in the living room.

Later that even a strip of tape along the bottom of the master fuse box activated and every fuse in the box blew. Vernon stubbed his little toe twice as he made his way to the fuse box and reset them. Twenty minutes later, they all blew again.

"Bloody great." Vernon thought. "Now I've got to call a bloody electrician."

The next morning because the alarm clock wasn't working, Vernon and Petunia overslept. Vernon was an hour late for work and spent several minutes being chewed out by his boss. He was also chewed out again about the smell that seemed to always be around Vernon.

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"You know ze spell I used on zat idiot who insulted Gabrielle and me?" Fleur asked.

"Malfoy?" Harry asked, "The spell that emptied his digestive system?"

"Yes zat one." Fleur replied. "It has a potion equivalent which I brewed and dried into a powder. All it takes is a some skin contact and ze effects occur. I added it to several of the bog rolls stored in zeir cupboard."

"So five minutes after they leave the bathroom..."Hermione asked.

"Zey will need to return...oui."

"And when she told us what she was doing," George said, "we added a bit of a surprise ourselves."

"If he flushes the toilet while still seated on it," Fred continued, "Like he will probably do under that much release. The toilet will not drain."

The twins turned to Fleur, "By any chance do you have any of the powder left?" George asked.

"We want to put a little more on Malfoy and a few other of the Slytherin scumbags."

"A little." And when she handed over the vial in her pocket the twins looked at it like it was more valuable than Galleons.

Vernon Dursley grumbled at his wife for not replacing the bog roll as he grabbed a new one out of the cupboard. He made sure his grumbles weren't loud enough for Petunia to hear since he was still sleeping on the couch because of those bloody magazines. After finishing his business he cleaned up and left the john. Sitting in the living room a few minutes later he felt the unmistakable urge to return immediately which he just barely managed to do. Vernon felt like his entire insides had been turned to liquid as it poured out of him. He reached and flushed the toilet to make sure there was no chance of stoppage. The tainted water under him started to rise and quickly submerged the bottom most part of the overly large walrus

arse and continued to rise further until it poured out of the toilet in all directions. Unfortunately for Vernon, he was still dispensing additional mostly liquefied waste and couldn't move.

"PETUNIA!" Vernon screamed as he literally started crying amongst the smell in the john.

Petunia responded to the cry to find her husband sitting on the toilet with the floor covered in brown smelly liquid with partial brown bits floating in it. The smell caused her to immediately vacate her dinner into the mess on the floor. After it was finally cleaned up, she felt pity on her husband and allowed him to return to his bed that night where he dreamed of waterfalls again. The smell of urine wouldn't come out of the bed this time and they had to replace the mattress.

Severe diarrhea raged through the Dursley home for the next couple of weeks with overflows happening several times as well. They even visited the doctor where he gave them anti-diarrhea pills and told them to drink plenty of liquids. One day after leaving the loo Petunia made her way to the kitchen where she saw another rat. This time she pushed the chair over to the phone before hopping onto it, and as she was screaming at her husband to get the exterminator back she felt that pressure that had come all too familiar recently.

"Petunia dear." Vernon called when his wife's voice stopped. "What's wrong?" The next thing he heard was a groan from his wife and a sound like water pouring onto the floor.

"VERNON! COME HOME NOW" Petunia screamed.

"What's wrong?"

"WHAT'S WRONG? I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S WRONG, I JUST MESSED ON MYSELF, NOW GET YOUR FAT ARSE HOME NOW AND HELP ME." Petunia screamed at her husband and then started sobbing.

A man with shaggy black hair was sitting at a table in the Chamber of Secrets. On the table was a mirror he had been watching. As the screeching voice of his Godson's aunt declared she had messed on herself after she had been yelling at her husband about another rat, he couldn't hold in the laughter. He could just visualize the horse faced bitch standing on a chair surrounded by her own mess. It

wasn't long before the stitch in his side was aching. Finally composing himself, he pulled the parchment over and made another note to share with everyone later.

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It was no secret that Severus Snape hated Harry Potter. In the past years it had been relatively easy to ridicule and berate him in class because of his poor potion making abilities. Severus loved to use the power he had to make the son of his most hated rival suffer. "I might have agreed to protect Lily's son," He thought, "but it's doesn't mean I can't make James' son life a living hell." Seeing the anger burn in young Mr. Potter's eyes without him being able to retaliate was candy to Severus' soul. Recently that had all changed. Potter's potions had become on par with Miss Granger's. "The bloody Miss know-it-all". Even when he put them on opposite sides of the room so there was no way for her to be helping Potter, his potions were still coming out close to perfect each time. "I can't even get him angry anymore." He thought to himself. "Every time I see a glint of anger in his eyes, he seems to master himself and that stupid smile returns." Severus was also thwarted by Potter's sudden occlumency abilities. "He used to be an open book to my passive legilimency. I knew exactly how to make him angry. It's also like no occlumency I've ever felt. Normally I can still feel the walls in the mind, but his is more like nothingness. I can't even feel his mind at all. No one can master mind protection that quickly without help from Dark Arts." He thought. "I must speak to the Headmaster."

Twenty minutes later Snape was sitting in front of Dumbledore's desk.

"Yes, I am very familiar with Mr. Potter's ability to shield his mind Severus." The Headmaster said.

"And how did he do it so quickly?" Snape asked.

"How it was done is none of your concern for the time being Severus, but I will assure you that it was neither illegal nor dangerous for Mr. Potter."

"How am I supposed to protect the boy if I don't know such things?"

"You are but one part of Mr. Potter's protection." Dumbledore said with a more firm tone. "You do not need to know everything. The secret is Mr. Potter's to share if and when he desires to."

Snape was frustrated. If Potter had been dabbling in something he wasn't supposed to be, it would be something to hold against the brat, but the Headmaster was quite convinced the boy had done this in some fashion that was legal. He knew Potter's new girlfriend was part Veela. "Of course it's typical Potter behavior to convince some girl that he did something to make it look like he saved her life." Snape thought. "If she was in peril he probably caused it like his father did with me. He then probably arrogantly convinced her to fall for him since she owed him." Severus almost snarled at the thought as he remembered his old nemesis and his friend Sirius hitting on any girl they could. Bringing his mind back to the younger Potter he thought of his girlfriend again. Her being part Veela made passive legilimency difficult if not impossible. Even if it was possible the fact she was the daughter of the Deputy Minister of Magic of France would prevent him from trying. "If it was found out, even Dumbledore couldn't protect me if a formal complaint occurred from the French Ministry." The Potion Master thought.

Albus knew Severus Snape was an extremely good occlumens which is the only way he had survived the previous war as Dumbledore's spy in the ranks of the Death Eaters, but he didn't need to be able to read Snape's mind to know what he was thinking. "Severus, leave young Mr. Potter alone. He has enough to deal with right now with the tournament.."

"Another arrogant attempt at fame." Snape sneered.

"For someone who spends an inordinate amount of time scanning Mr. Potter's mind, you don't seem to be interested in determining facts concerning him." Dumbledore said in a hard tone. "I've told you several times that Mr. Potter did not enter himself in the tournament, of that I am very certain. Who did and what their ultimate aim was I am not sure but I am greatly concerned as is Alastor. Now as I was saying, young Mr. Potter has enough to be concerned with at the moment for you to add to his problems. Do I make myself clear Severus?"

"Yes Headmaster."

"On another topic, is the mark still darkening?"

Snape glared at the Headmaster for a few seconds before pulling back his sleeve displaying a red tattoo of a skull with a snake coming out of its mouth. "Yes." He spit out then continued, "Karkarov cornered me again the other day. As I told you at the Yule Ball he will run if it burns."

"The crimes of one's past always seem to catch up with us before the end, don't they Severus?" Dumbledore said quietly. "And those are the ones which hurt the most." He thought as he watched the glare intensify in Snape's eyes before his Potion Master turned and stalked out of his office.

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Harry and his bond mates were again the Chamber studying. The door to the secondary area had been forced to stay open so Remus could work on the discarded Basilisk skins. Hermione kept glancing over at the door and finally threw down her quill.

"I want to know what a Horcrux is." She said as she got up and walked into the area headed for Slytherin's library again. It had been a growing irritation for the young witch to have a book snatched out of her hands and then not be able to find out what exactly that word had meant. She'd even research the restricted section of the library with a pass from Professor McGonagall to no avail. She hadn't told McGonagall the real reason she wanted the pass since she had been afraid that the Headmaster might try to prevent her from looking for it if she told him. She'd told her Head of House she wanted to see if the restricted section had anything more on bonds. She had felt guilty about giving McGonagall the little lie, but she couldn't help but feel it was important.

"We've already looked over the books in there love." Harry said. When Dumbledore hadn't requested a return visit to the Chamber library after taking the books he did, the bonded quartet had waited the day and then started looking at the books themselves. Fleur knew the protection spell for older books and had quickly taught it to Harry and then it went to Gabrielle and Hermione. There had been several books written in Parceltongue that Harry was making extremely slow progress in trying to understand. Being able to understand Parceltongue did not mean he could take that

knowledge and apply it to how the magic behind the speech worked. He spent some time each day trying to translate the squiggly lines into English words.

"I'm looking again." Hermione replied shortly.

Harry sighed. He knew why she was short and irritable, but also knew it would end sometime tomorrow if the previous month had been a good indicator. The previous month he had wondered how he never realized there were times that Hermione had been a bit more emotional and argumentative. He followed her and found her staring at the books on one of the bookshelves. He walked up behind her and wrapped his arms around her, pulling her closer to him. He move some of her hair away from her neck and lightly kissed the the spot right below her ear that he knew she loved being kissed as he whispered, "I love you." He felt her relax some in the bond. After a few more kisses he asked "What can I do to help?"

"You go finish your assignment." Hermione said. "I'll look around here some more." Though she said that, he felt her arms tighten over his holding them in place.

"I prefer to hold you." Harry told her. Hermione smiled a little as she knew he really meant it. But of course his assignment was an essay for History of Magic so he would probably prefer to hold Millicent Bullstrode rather than finish the assignment.

"Not Millicent." Harry said after catching her thoughts, "Maybe Parkinson though." The instant change in her emotions meant he had forgotten his golden rule, 'No teasing on these days.'

"I didn't mean it love." Harry said quickly, "It was a joke."

"I know and I'm not mad at you." Hermione replied. "You're picking up my emotions before I can control them. If you were not inside my head, you'd have never known I even reacted to you saying that."

"I like being inside you head." Harry said as he turned Hermione around and looked into her eyes. "It lets me know when I'm doing something that hurts you and I never want to hurt you." He kissed her softly. "Not even for an instant." He kissed her again. He felt her desire to make the kiss deeper and he responded. After a few minutes when they separated, his eyes returned to hers, the

intensity of the emerald gaze caused Hermione's whole existence to fade into them as he continued, "I don't know what I did to earn your love, but whatever it was, I want to make sure I keep doing it." Harry lips touched again and again deepened into a passionate kiss that Fleur and Gabrielle felt as they were doing their work. They looked at other and smiled, quickly getting up; they dashed to find their bond mate and sister.

"Eet is 'Arry snogging time?" Said a voice from behind them as Harry and Hermione's kiss came to an end. They both knew that Fleur had joined them and when they looked at her, she smiled. "Perhaps you were searching for zis 'orcrux zing in 'Arry's mouth? Maybe I can 'elp in ze examination?"

"Me too!" Gabrielle chimed in as she came in behind Fleur.

Hermione couldn't help but smile at her bond sisters antics. "You let them do their searching." She said to Harry. "And I'll look some more at these books."

"Sure you're alright?"

"I am love." Hermione replied.

The two of them kept their eyes locked for several more seconds until finally Hermione gave him one more quick kiss on his lips and pushed him toward her bond sisters. As she was watched Fleur snag Harry's lips first, Hermione smiled as she shook her head. She reached into a pocket of her robes and pulled out a piece of Honeyduke caramel filled chocolate that she had put there from the box Harry had given her the previous day. "I would love to go back in time to earlier this year just to see my own face as I told my earlier self that in just a few months she would be love bonded to her best friend, whom she actually loves, along with two other women who just happen to be the Veela that she despises and her sister." She thought, and then she put her hand to her forehead as she realized what she had just thought. "I think all of this talk about pranking is getting to me. I'm now thinking of pranking myself in the past." She shook her head again as she turned back to the books even as she felt the sensation of Fleur kissing Harry creeping into her mind.

"Maybe I can ask Papa about ze 'orcruxes 'Ermione." Fleur said a couple of evenings later. Hermione had gotten permission from

Professor McGonagall to spend time with Fleur studying in her bond sisters' Carriage room. Harry was asleep in Gryffindor Tower and Gabrielle was already in bed almost asleep. "Even if 'e doesn't know what zey are 'e's got people to find information."

"I wouldn't want to put your father to any trouble Fleur." Hermione replied. "Not for something silly like this."

"Its not silly. And wouldn't you ask your own father if 'e could look up ze information?"

"Probably, but he can't."

"Yes but you are family 'Ermione. Papa told you zat you should consider yourself one of 'is daughters so we'll be asking your father as well." Fleur argued. "Besides I'm just as curious."

"But what if it's something we shouldn't be asking about?"

"Did your 'eadmaster say not to?" Fleur asked. "Even if 'e 'ad, what right would 'e 'ave to prevent you from learning somezing?"

Hermione fidgeted as she thought. "But it had to have been Riddle who wrote it which means it's probably Dark Magic of some sort."

"Eef it is Dark Magic do you plan on using eet?" Fluor asked.

"Of course not." Hermione replied but realized the verbal trap Fleur was so excellent in setting. She sighed and recited a line Fleur had told her at an earlier time. "All knowledge is useful in developing an overall understanding of a subject, even that which has been discovered to be wrong or outdated. So even Dark Magic in understanding has a purpose in understanding magic overall?"

"Exactly my sister." Fleur responded. "You told me already zat your Defense teacher taught you ze unforgivables, even put you under ze imperious, could zis be worse?"

"If Voldemort was researching it, it very well could be. But ok, we'll ask your father."

"Non, we'll ask our," Fleur's hand gestured between the two of them, "Papa. You 'ave two fathers now. You know 'e and Maman ask about you in every letter."

Hermione smiled as she remembered the letters Fleur and Gabrielle received and even a few letters addressed directly to her. "I wished my father was that accepting."

"It will happen with time 'Ermione. 'Ee's already supports your decision, but it will take time for 'im to really see 'ow 'appy you are and will be. Besides your mother did say it was alright for me and Gabrielle to visit zis summer."

"But they haven't decided on whether it would be 'appropriate' for Harry to join us."

"Zey are still seeing it as zeir fifteen year old daughter wants to bring 'er boyfriend 'ome. Zey might say zey understand ze bond is permanent, but it really 'asn't sunk into zem yet what zat means." Fleur replied. "Besides it will make sleeping next to 'Arry all ze better when we are back with 'im at my 'ouse."

Hermione's cheeks turned pink as she thought of the morning she woke up being held by her bondmate and of how Harry had used his memory of that moment in creating his Patronus. "You're parents will allow us to sleep with him?"

"Of course. Zey might 'esitate slightly over Gabrielle but not much. Especially with what Maman said. But my parents understand ze bond and what it means, and ze French culture doesn't 'ave ze same....same views on sex as you do 'ere."

"I get to sleep with 'Arry too?" Gabrielle asked quietly from her bed.

"Of course Gabi." Fleur said, "Zo Maman might 'esitate a little with you."

"Je ne peux pas attendre." Hermione heard along with a long sigh from her younger bond sister. She gave a quizzical look at Fleur. Though Hermione had read several French books, hearing the language, especially spoken that softly made it difficult to translate.

"She can't wait." Fleur replied to the look. "Neither can I."

"Ok, I can't either." Hermione agreed. "But are we talking about just being in bed with Harry or actually...well..that."

"Sex?" and when Hermione blushinglly nodded Fleur continued. "At ze moment I was speaking of just being in 'is bed, but you've figured out what's going to 'appen when one of us does 'ave sex with 'Arry?"

Hermione nodded again. "Harry and I sort of discussed it when I woke up beside him." She said. "I...I was nervous he might think I meant something more when he found me in his bed. Truthfully I really don't think I could have told him no if he had wanted to go further, but I..I don't think I'm ready for that yet." She said nervously. "He was very understanding. He said he wouldn't ask until we were ready. But once it happens then.." Hermione's voice trailed off as she looked at Fleur.

"We're all going to feel eet...oui." Fleur replied. "And once zat 'appens for one, zen we all will want to do eet."

Hermione looked over at the younger Delacour. "But Gabrielle."

"Eet will 'appen for 'er as well."

"So three years?" Hermione knew Gabrielle's fourteenth birthday was on May twenty-seventh, which was a little more than a month away.

"Non, eet won't be zat long."

"But she's too young."

"Speaking as 'er big sister, I'll always zink she is too young, but as 'er bond sister I know she won't be." Fleur replied.

"So you don't think we will be married first?" Hermione asked. It wasn't a big factor in her life, but she had thought of possibly of her first sexual encounter being her wedding night.

Fleur sat down the quill that was still in her hand, and looked away for a few seconds before turning back to Hermione. "I don't want you to mention zis to 'Arry and try to not zink of eet to 'im, s'il vous plait, because I don't' want 'im to feel any pressure to be or do more zan

'e's already doing." When Hermione nodded her head but with a look of concern in her eyes Fleur continued. "To Gabrielle and I, 'Arry is already our 'usband." At the look of shock on Hermione's face she quickly explained. "I don't mean we're magically or legally married or anyzing like zat. But what is marriage 'ermione? It's when you commit yourself to ze one you're going to be with for ze rest of your life is eet not? And declare zere will be no other besides 'im?"

Hermione started to get a look of recognition on her face as she slowly nodded.

"Gabrielle and I 'ave committed ourselves to ze man we will spend our lives with and zere will be nor even can be no other. You 'ave also, but you 'ave to come to terms with what you call eet in your own mind. But to me, 'Arry is my 'usband and someday I 'ope I am one of 'is wives." Fleur's smile appeared on her face, "Someday I want a beautiful ceremony and a beautiful dress and have 'Arry declare 'e takes me for one of 'is wives."

"Of course that will happen." Hermione said. "He already thinks of you and Gabrielle as his family so why wouldn't you? And when were discussing it at the dinner with my parents, he was already talking about how he would be married to all of us."

"It's still 'is choice and zat's why I don't want you to say anyzing to 'im." Fleur said. "I don't want 'im to zink 'e 'as to marry me because of ze bond or try to be a 'usband without being ready for eet. We will always be connected and 'e will always be my love, but eet is up to 'im to develop ze love for me and my sister as 'e does for you and decide 'e wants to marry us."

"He will love you." Hermione replied. "Besides, I wouldn't accept a proposal from him unless he was also going to propose to you and Gabrielle at the same time."

"You wouldn't?" Fleur asked a little surprised.

"No, I really wouldn't. You and Gabrielle...well I can't think of the words to say the feeling I have for you two. I never been this close to other females before. You're my friends, my sisters and well everything. I've never had a female friend I could discuss personal things with." Hermione declared. "But as for him loving you, it's not

even a concern. Harry can't help but fall deeply in love with you two."

"Can I tell you somezing else and you not tell our bondmate? Or at least try to keep it from him."

"I'll try."

" 'E is already starting to love us." Fleur said with a small smile. "I first noticed it when we did ze patronuses, but ever since zen it's been growing."

"That's wonderful." Hermione exclaimed. "But why don't you want Harry to know?"

"I just want 'im to discover it for 'imself or at least let it grow more." Fleur replied. "I can't wait for ze day 'e tells me 'e loves me like 'e tells you."

"I..I never realized it bothered you." Hermione said realizing how many times Harry told her those words but he never said them to Fleur or Gabrielle.

"Non..Non. Eet does not bother me 'Ermione. Eet is a good zing." Fleur responded immediately. "eet makes 'im 'appy and it makes you 'appy. I just want to hear 'im say ze words to me and feel it when 'e does. Try to keep it from 'im if you can please. 'E will eventually do eet and eet will be very special when 'e does."

"I won't tell him." Hermione said. "And I'll try to not think about it."

"Zank you." Fleur said then continued. "But back to your question, we might wait until marriage to 'ave sex, but only if ze marriage 'appens pretty quickly. One or two years at ze most."

"But Gabrielle?" Hermione objected again. "She won't be old enough to marry by then and my parents would kill me."

"Gabrielle will be ready. You 'eard my Maman when ze topic of marriage came up. She said zat it would probably 'appen before Gabrielle turned seventeen." Fleur replied. "I zink she 'ad already figured out 'ow ze sex was going to be an issue and zinks zat

marriage or at least ze proposal would 'appen either before or shortly after we start being intimate with 'Arry."

"So you think Harry will propose and marry us within the next two years?"

"I don't know. I zink my mother zinks zat, but I am sure we will be intimate with 'Arry before two years."

"But Gabrielle will only be fifteen or sixteen. You really think she will be ready for that?"

"After one or two years of experiencing ze kisses 'Arry gives and being entranced by zose eyes of 'is? She won't be just ready, she'll be demanding. Especially if 'is love for us grows into something similar to what 'e 'as for you. It will be no different zan for you and me. Do you zink you can wait longer zan zat?"

"It is a pretty powerful affect he has isn't it?" Hermione said blushing.

Fleur actually blushed as she responded to the question, "Yes it is. I..I already want 'im 'Ermione. When 'e looks at me with zose eyes of 'is and zen kisses me I....well I just want more sometimes. I've been teasing 'im trying to get 'im to look at my body. I'm probably doing more zan I should but..."

Hermione couldn't help but continue her blush at her bond sister's declaration. "But shouldn't we wait for Gabrielle to be old enough, I mean to be seventeen?"

"If we try it prevent it from 'appening because of Gabrielle, she might start feeling guilty or we might start resenting 'er. Remember that Gabrielle is unique in zis situation, she transformed months before she should 'ave and bonded immediately afterwords. She could be the youngest Veela bond ever to 'appen. But we will agree zat it will not 'appen zis summer oui?"

"Definitely not this summer."

"Zen when ze summer is over we will discuss it some more."

"Fair enough." Hermione agreed.

The two older bondmates continued to discuss other things but a little later Fleur had another question for 'Ermione.

"Did your 'air never settle down?" She asked seeing her friend's bushy hair. "Has it at least been more manageable?"

"Oh..yes it did." Hermione asked excitedly. "It's been much easier to comb and a week ago it did this." She picked up her wand and gave a wave over her head and muttered a finite command. Her hair quickly descended from the bushy mess it normally is to a very stylish slightly curled look. "I've been using a spell to keep it bushy looking so not to have too many questions asked."

"Does 'Arry know?"

"I 'aven't told him and he hasn't asked." Hermione replied. "Not sure if he knows from me thinking about it or not. I've been waiting for the right time to show him."

"Can you change it magically?"

"I haven't tried." Hermione admitted, "I was just excited it was doing what its doing. I mean its exactly what I've always wanted as it is now."

"If it's doing zat on its own, I imagine you can. Especially if it's exactly 'ow you want it to be. Go over to ze mirror, and look at yourself." Fleur said. "When you can visualize yourself perfectly with what you want your 'air to look like, close your eyes and picture it in your mind zen desire it to 'appen."

"You really think I can do it?"

"One way to find out." Fleur said smiling at her bond sister.

Hermione looked in the mirror and after a few minutes, Fleur saw her close her eyes, and noticed a look of concentration appeared on her face, and a few seconds later Hermione opened her eyes and looked back in the mirror. She had wished for perfectly straight hair and she saw it was now perfectly straight until it reached her ears and then it was the same slightly curled hair she had already, giving her a very odd looking hair style.

Hermione could see in the mirror that Fleur was giggling quietly behind her. After a few seconds the part Veela controlled her giggles and said to Hermione. "You made a common mistake. I did ze same zing when I first did it. You only zought about how it looks around your face so zat's exactly what you changed."

"You didn't tell me everything did you?" Hermione complained with a smile on her face.

"No. I wanted a little laugh if you succeeded." Fleur smirked. "Try it again, but zis time don't use ze mirror. Just try to make it as it's always been."

Hermione closed her eyes and brought up the image of her bushy hair that had stared back at her for years. This time she concentrated on the entire length as it fell past her shoulders. When she opened her eyes and looked in the mirror a very familiar sight of her hair as it's been for years greeted her.

She turned back to Fleur and smiled, "We aren't even anymore. You can't imagine what this means to me. Harry and manageable hair? Hmmm..tough to decide which is better."

Fleur playfully rolled her eyes at Hermione "So you play with your 'air tomorrow, and I take your 'Arry time?"

"Ok, so Harry's better, much better than the hair. But it's still just amazing and it's something else I owe you and Gabrielle for."

"It wasn't somezing we gave you, it just 'appened because of ze magic. Besides zere is no owing amongst sisters is zere?" Fleur asked. "Even if zere was you gave me somezing earlier zat was more precious zan changing 'airstyles."

"I didn't give you anything." Hermione replied, trying to think what Fleur might be talking about.

"Yes you did. When you said you wouldn't take a proposal from our bond mate without it being for all of us," Fleur replied, "it meant ze world to me."

"But it wasn't even necessary. Harry would never do that." Hermione replied.

"But it means you also see us as family 'Ermione. You said it instinctively as you truly feel you are our sister."

"Of course I do!" Hermione exclaimed.

"Ok you two," Gabrielle said quietly, "I was 'aving a perfectly wonderful dream about 'Arry and you two woke me up. Now go to sleep so I can get back in 'Arry's arms."

"Yes Gabi." Fleur said as she smiled at Hermione.

"Well I better get back to the castle." Hermione said as she looked at her watch. "Wow, how did it get so late."

"Girl talk will do zat sometimes." Fleur said. "Stay and sleep here. You can sleep in my bed."

"With you?" Hermione asked suddenly nervous.

"Is zere somezing wrong with zat?" Fleur asked.

"Its just I..I mean except for the night with Harry I've never slept in the same bed with anyone except my parents."

"Well you might want to get use to it, I doubt it will be ze only time we end up in ze same bed." Seeing the look in Hermione's eyes, she rolled her own eyes "I've got to stop talking about sex with you." She said with a smile to let Hermione know it was more of a joke. "If sometime in ze future we are going to be married to ze same man, it is likely we will sleep...and I do mean sleep in ze same bed with 'im at ze same time."

Hermione's mind immediately realized quickly the other implications that sentence carried with it. "What about..."

"Don't even zink of it now, we'll figure zat out when it 'appens." Fleur said cutting Hermione off.

"Will you two go to sleep, or I won't let either of you sleep with 'Arry." Gabrielle grumbled.

Hermione smiled at Fleur and then they both looked over at their sleepy bond sister. "Ok, we're going." Hermione replied.

A/N: So the Dursley's are not enjoying life right now and Fleur and Hermione have had another conversation concerning the relationship.

I think I will be putting a new chapter up pretty soon. I had written 2000 words past this point, but decided to put it in a new chapter to keep this one from being too long.

Chapter 21

"I weakened one of the steps on the stairs." Fleur said. Then she said over the bond to Harry and her bond sisters, "It was the step right over the cupboard." She saw Harry smile a little knowing he remembered his cousin often waking him by stomping on that step.

Vernon Dursley was living in a nightmare. The whole electrical system in his house had seemed to go haywire as things just shut off all the time. The electrician had tested and ruled out any problems with the main fuse box and was now suggesting there must be a short somewhere that was overloading the main panel. He had already spent two complete days at the Dursley house trying to isolate it but so far had had no success. Finally he handed Vernon an estimate on rewiring most of the house. Vernon knew the amount would wipe out the remainder of their savings and the money they had set aside for their family vacation during the summer. He told the electrician he would get back to him and as he stomped up the steps, one of them gave way and his left foot sunk into splintered wooden surface. Coincidentally it was the step right above the cupboard under the stair. The step his son Dudley liked to jump up and down on to wake his cousin in earlier days. "All those years of jumping up and down on it, probably caused it to weaken." Vernon thought and then as the nerves in his leg reported to the proper location in his Vernon's minuscule brain that his leg was seriously hurt, intense pain cascaded throughout the leg.

"PETUNIA!"

Removing Vernon from the step was much easier thought than done. His weight and no leverage on the steps for his wife to help him, finally forced her to call for an emergency team to pull him loose. They finally freed Vernon but only after cutting away two more steps and giving several suggestions to Vernon that he might consider a diet. They spent several minutes removing splinters and bandaging his leg. Once they were gone, Vernon had to call a carpenter to repair the destroyed steps and check for weaknesses in the others. As he picked up the phone to make the call he found the line was dead. After his anger and frustration had passed Vernon realized that before he could make that call to the carpenter he would have to replace the phone he just destroyed and the window he had thrown the phone through in his frustration. Not to mention the wiring that pulled out of the wall when he yanked the phone loose.

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Harry had just got out of Divinations and was joining Hermione and Fleur in the Chamber. When he got there Fleur was sitting at the table with her back to the door and was talking to a girl next to her who had a matching straight hair style. "Who? Did Fleur bring someone new down here?" He asked himself. Fleur and the strange haired girl both laughed at each other and turned to face Harry.

"Hermione?" Harry gulped as he saw who the stranger was. Hermione's hair was perfectly straight. He just stood and stared, unsure what to say.

"Do you like it?" Hermione asked. "Or do you prefer it with curls?" She closed her eyes and her hair glowed and curls now cascaded down the length of her hair.

"But...but...how?" Harry asked. He saw she didn't have her wand.

Hermione got up and walked over to Harry and put her arms around his neck. "It seems I am picking up something of the Veela magic from the bond."

"Veela magic?" Harry looked over at Fleur who smiled and nodded. She closed her eyes and her hair changed to match Hermione's curls. Harry kept glancing between the two ladies, his mouth agape.

Both of them started laughing. "I think we broke him." Hermione said. She caught Harry's lips with her own and gave him a welcoming kiss. "So do you like it this way?"

"I..oh course...but you're beautiful no matter what your hair looks like." Harry replied still staring wide eyed at her curls.

Fleur had walked over by then and she looked at Hermione. "We do 'ave a good boyfriend. 'E always says ze right zings."

"Give him time, I'm sure he'll put his foot in his mouth eventually."

That snapped Harry from his mesmerized stupor and he pulled Hermione closer, catching her a little off guard, "Oh really? Well

maybe I'll just have to take the appropriate measures to prevent my being able to do that."

"And what might that be?" Hermione asked as she looked into his eyes again.

"Oh, something like this." He replied and started demonstrating that if his mouth was covering hers, it would be impossible for a foot to get in there. When the kiss ended, and Hermione was staring unfocused, he continued, "I meant it when I said I think you're beautiful no matter what your hair looks like, but I like the curls. It makes it easier to kiss here." His lips touched lightly on her neck below her ear, "and here." Slightly lower his lips touched. "And especially here." This time right at the spot her neck curved into her shoulder. Hermione's eyes were closed as her entire being was centered on the spots Harry's lips touched. Only his arms holding her kept her legs from buckling.

Up in the second floor transfiguration classroom, Professor McGonagall was concerned for young Miss Delacour. As she had been demonstrating the latest lesson she noticed the young lady's eyes seem to lose focus for a few seconds and she continued to be distracted for a minute or so afterwards. "Miss Delacour, is there a problem?"

Ginny looked at her friend as Gabrielle's attention returned and she blushed. "Non, My apologies Professor. I just zought of something....pleasant."

"Are you suggesting my class is less than pleasant?"

"Non Professor. It was a personal sought. May I discuss it after class?"

"Certainly." McGonagall replied, her Scottish burr rolling in the reply.

After class when Ginny offered to stay Gabrielle insisted that she go on alone. "I'll be fine." she told her friend.

"Miss Delacour, I've noticed on several occasions you seemed to lose your concentration in class." McGonagall said to Gabrielle once class ended. "Is there a particular reason why?"

"Professor, zis 'as something to do with 'Arry. Can I ask you to put a privacy charm up please?"

"Of course it would have something to do with Harry Potter." Minerva muttered to herself as she picked up her wand and with a flick the appropriate charm was set. Though no sound could go out, sound could still come in and Gabrielle smiled as she heard several footsteps start immediately moving away from the class. "So what is causing you to lose your concentration?"

Gabrielle blushed as she tried to figure out what to say. After a quick word to her bond mates it was decided to be honest and explain the problem. "Your class is at a time when 'Arry, Fleur and 'Ermione are all out of class." She explained.

"And why is that a problem? Are you saying you would prefer to be with them instead of being in class?"

"Non...oui of course I also want to be with my bond mate...but zat's not ze reason I get distracted." Gabrielle looked around the classroom before explaining. "We share a lot over our bond Professor, emotions and especially ze more powerful feelings."

McGonagall suddenly had a feeling of her own, one where she guessed she was going to regret this conversation.

"So when 'arry and Fleur or 'Ermione 'ave a more...more," Gabrielle searched for an appropriate word, "exuberant kiss, I feel it."

McGonagall definitely knew she wished this conversation had never happened. She knew it was going to be difficult for she herself to concentrate in class the next time she saw the young witch lose focus again. "Yes, well...hmmm...yes well tell Mr. Potter, Ms. Granger and your sister to please refrain from such...such exuberance during this class time if you please."

"Oui, it's done and zey say zey're sorry. 'Ermione is very embarrassed."

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Mid April 1995

Homework was piling up as the days led into Easter holidays. Harry was amazed at Hermione as she not only did her work and kept him on track but continued to research what a horcrux was and never relented on her personal vendetta against Rita Skeeter. Being inside his bond mate's mind help him see how focused she could stay on a topic. Fleur was helping her as she could. Especially trying to determine any way Skeeter might be magically listening to conversations. Gabrielle was spending more time with Ginny and Luna who they had started inviting to their study groups when they were in the Library.

Harry finally gave up on approaching Ron. He came to believe that even if he fixed things up now, it would all fall apart again during the summer, so he decided he would wait and see if he could do anything at that time. By the end of the Easter break he realized it was going to be more than Ron he would have to deal with. Hedwig showed up at the end of the week from delivering Fleur's letter to her father and she was carrying a package of Easter Eggs. She had obviously stopped by the Burrow on her way back. There were three eggs in the package. The package had two dragon sized eggs for Harry and Ron and another one that was smaller than a chicken's egg for Hermione. Once Harry undid the package and saw who they were for, he looked down the table at his former best friend who was busy shoveling food nonstop into his mouth. He turned to Ginny and handed her Ron's egg.

"Can you give this to Ron?" He asked.

"Sure Harry." She replied.

Harry then handed Hermione her egg. When she saw the size of it she asked. "Why do you think mine is smaller?"

"She read the article in Witch Weekly about you breaking Harry's heart and now blames you for his current love interest." Ginny replied as she rolled her eyes. "She mentioned it in a letter a few days ago and I've been hesitant to bring it up. I didn't think she would do something like that though." Nodding at the egg in front of Hermione.

Harry immediately started wrapping his egg back up. "I can't and won't accept this." He said. "She hurt you Hermione, and still hasn't

apologized to Gabrielle, but still sends me something like everything is just fine."

"Eets not a problem 'Arry," Gabrielle said. "Keep ze egg. Eet doesn't bother me."

Harry looked at her and smiled. "It bothers me Angel, and yes it is a problem, but it's her problem not mine. Besides, I think if I send this back to her, it might hopefully make her think about what she's done."

Hermione quickly pushed her own egg back to Harry. "Then send this one back to her also."

"I'm sorry that she's now taking it out on you too." Harry said.

"Hopefully she will come around." Hermione replied. "But if not, there's not much we can do."

"I love you." Harry said as he looked at her, his emerald green eyes again mesmerizing her. She had to turn away before they stared at each other too long but not before she replied, "I love you too."

Harry pulled out a piece of parchment and quickly jotted down a note.

Mrs. Weasley,

Thank you for thinking of Hermione and me on this holiday, but we are both uncomfortable accepting the eggs you sent and are returning them with this note. You and your family have been wonderful to me over the years and I hope to always remember those thoughts when I think of the Weasley family. Unfortunately until you can accept that I have a relationship with Gabrielle and apologize for the rudeness you showed in your letter and howler, it will always be just that, memories. I am also disappointed that you now are trying to blame Hermione because of the article in the Witch Weekly. The writer of the article was badly misinformed because at no time has Hermione ever broken my heart. Even if the size of the egg you sent Hermione hadn't been an issue, she would still have joined me in this endeavor as she has grown close to Gabrielle and Fleur as well. Unfortunately we have had a falling out with Ron since

he seems to share your views when it concerns my girlfriend's heritage.

Please reconsider your attitude toward Gabrielle and Veelas in general. Only an apology will allow me to look upon you as family as I once did.

Harry

He sat down his quill and then remembered something. He picked back up his quill and added.

PS. Please do not send another Howler. It will be destroyed before it has a chance to speak.

"I didn't want to single out our relationship with Ginny, Fred and George and cause their mother to be angry with them if she has issues with my response." Harry said as he showed the letter to Hermione who agreed with the content. Harry put it in with the eggs being returned and turned to his owl.

"Can you make it back to the Burrow, or do you need a rest?"

Hedwig gave him a look of disgust and promptly stuck her foot out.

"Rest at the Burrow when you get there. I'm sure Mrs. Weasley will take care of you." Harry said stroking the snowy owl and then fed her a couple pieces of bacon. "We'll see you when you get back."

"I'm sorry 'Arry." Gabrielle said.

Harry could feel the distress she was feeling and he put his arm around her and gave her a small kiss. "Don't be. You, my angel are not the cause of this problem."

"Zank you." She replied. "I just wished it wasn't a problem."

"So do I." Harry replied. "The Weasleys have been like my family and I would like nothing more than for them to welcome you like your family welcomed me. But you," Harry looked from Gabrielle to Fleur, "and you are my family, and no one will insult either of you."

All of Harry's bond mates could feel the protectiveness and caring radiating from Harry. Fleur found herself smiling as she tried not to think about what she felt in the bond.

Molly Weasley was confused when Hedwig returned with the same package that she had sent her with. Upon re-opening the package she saw one of the eggs was missing. Seeing the note she picked it up and read it. When she finished, her first impulse was to immediately send a howler, but she had read the PS and decide for now not to. Mrs. Weasley found herself re-reading the message several more times while sitting at the kitchen table. Each time she read it, she remembered the eleven year old Harry Potter looking for the magical platform to find the Hogwarts Express. "Doesn't he understand that I know what's best for him?" She thought. "The poor child is only fourteen and obviously confused." Molly kept thinking about the letter as she fixed herself a lunch. Finally sitting back down and reading the letter one more time as she ate she thought, "I'll wait until this summer when he's here at the Burrow. Once he's away from that girl for a while, I'm sure he'll realize that Ginny or Hermione would be a much better choice for him."

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April 21st 1995

A few days later an Owl landed in front of Fleur. They all recognized the owl as being one of the Delacour Family owls.

"It's a reply from Papa." She said and after reading it herself, she then read it to the other over the bond so no one around could hear.

Ma Petite,

It took a while but Bernard, my most trusted researcher, found the information you are looking for. Unfortunately it is not something I feel comfortable putting in a letter. The word you gave me to look up represents the very depth of dark magic to achieve immortality. Can you tell me why you need to know this information? Something tells me it is not a research project for a class. I am concerned about this information becoming more readily known so even though I trust Bernard with my life I did require him to take a vow of secrecy once I found what the information was concerning. I will be in London next month and can personally bring the book for you to read if you so

desire though I must strongly suggest you do not pursue the subject further. Just having this book in my possession makes me feel uneasy.

Papa

"Immortality?" Hermione gasped. "Could this be how..."

"How he survived that night?" Harry asked. "Guess it could be."

"Well at least we can stop looking." Fleur said. "I will tell Papa to bring ze book and we will 'ave ze answers."

"You're going to ask him to bring it?" Hermione asked. Though she wanted to know, she didn't want to ask Fleur's father to do something he wasn't comfortable doing.

"Of course. I 'ave ze same curiosity as you." Fleur replied. "I'll send a reply to 'im tomorrow along with letters to Maman." She turned to the owl "Nerval, wait in ze Owlery and I'll 'ave letters by tomorrow for ze family." She gave the owl a piece of bacon and it flew away.

"Nerval? After Gérard De Nerval?" Hermione asked excitedly. "The French Poet?"

"Yes." Fleur answered. "You know 'e supposedly kept finding out about ze wizarding world and 'is obli-viations is what caused 'im to slip into insanity. We studied 'im as an example of ze negative impact of ze International Code of Wizarding Secrecy in Government class. Papa of course 'ad already studied him, and named Nerval zat name to always remind him zat Non Magicals 'ave rights too." Fleur shrugged. "Sometimes eet is necessary to obli-viate someone, but Papa always says it should be ze last resort, not ze first."

The two women started talking about the poet, government and the secrecy codes. Harry lost interest pretty quickly until he heard a sentence that didn't make sense.

"Wait, did you say Nerval had a pet lobster that he walked down the streets of Paris?" He asked.

"Oui." Fleur replied.

Harry started wondering about the poor Mr. Roberts from the campground who was getting obliterated ten times a day. "I wonder if he's walking a lobster around London now?"

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April 30th 1995

The bond mates had stopped spending too much time in the Chamber because of the gruesome sight of the basilisk being carved up. Even when Remus had conjured a screen to hide it, just knowing what was going on behind it made them slightly queasy. Jars of blood and venom along with stacks of skins and teeth were being stored in the tunnel leading into the Chamber. The reason it hadn't been sold became apparent one evening when Remus came back from Hogsmeade. They were all back in the Chamber for a quick visit.

"Harry." He said. "We need a different person to sell the Basilisk parts if you don't want to get ripped off."

"What's the problem?"

"Mundungus Fletcher is the problem." Remus growled. "I know Albus likes him for some reason, but he's trying to rip you off on top of the seven percent you were going to pay him. I asked him what the going rate of venom was and he told me its a hundred galleons an ounce. As I told you, the book said it was one fifty two years ago, so I owled the author of the book to see if he knew what the current prices were and I just got his reply. He says it's a hundred seventy-five an ounce right now. Fletcher was trying to rip you off."

"Wasn't that dangerous?" Harry asked. "Didn't he want to know where you were getting Basilisk venom from?"

"I'm using a werewolf friend to make contact. As I told you, werewolves have a tendency to keep a foot in the not so legal world so he knows what to say and what not to say."

"Can your friend be trusted? And can ze author suggest a more 'onest seller?" Fleur asked.

"The author included the name of the seller he got his price from in his owl. Said he was very reputable." Remus replied. "Of course reputable is a very subjective term. I didn't want to contact him until I cleared it with you. As for my friend, he's not a friend of the Ministry and if we give him something like a percent, he'd be a good go between to buffer the sell."

Harry looked at Fleur, "What do you think?"

"Contact ze seller zrough your friend." She said to Remus. "See what 'e can do, especially on prices and percentages. Someone probably should talk to Professor Dumbledore. If we go around 'is recommendation, 'e will want to know why. Maybe we can still use zis Fletcher person but get ze current prices from zis other seller to keep 'im in line. If we do stay with 'im, we reduce 'is commission to five percent for ze dishonesty. If 'e 'as a problem with eet, I'll be glad to discuss it with 'im."

Remus raised an eyebrow at the no nonsense directions from Fleur. He turned to Harry. "Got to love a woman who can take charge."

"Paws off Mooney." Harry replied smiling. "That's my lady and she is quite special."

"She...in fact all of the young ladies remind me a lot of your mother Harry." Remus said. "She was force to be reckoned with but with a heart of gold."

Harry smiled at Fleur and Hermione then looking at Remus again he asked. "Can you tell me more about my mother Remus. I mean I know some things about my father but I don't know too much about mom."

Remus face softened as a look of sadness appeared on it. "Sure." He said, and then he composed his thoughts for a few seconds before continuing. "Lily was red headed tempest with heart of pure gold Harry. Smart, beautiful and a temper that even Merlin would have feared." Remus looked away as he fought the tears trying to materialize in his eyes. "She knew about my condition, one of the few who figured it out and it never bothered her. I will tell you the single most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life was the first time I saw her holding you Harry. She lit up the room with her glow of happiness. It was only a couple days after a full moon and just

that sight of her made all the pains I felt go away. Your mother really loved you. I should say she loves you, since I'm sure they are there watching you."

Hermione and Fleur moved to sit on either side of Harry as they felt his sadness. Gabrielle was currently in Transfiguration but she also felt the sadness.

"What's wrong love." Gabrielle asked.

"Nothing Angel. Remus is just telling me about my mother."

"Fleur and 'Ermione zere?"

"Yes."

"Zey'll take care of you. I'll see you soon as class is over." Gabrielle said. "I love you."

Remus gave a little laugh as the tears still threaten to fall, then he continued, "Your mother hated your father you know." At the questioning look Harry gave him, he continued, "I mean at the beginning, they didn't get together until their seventh year. Your father had a bit of arrogance about him when he got here. He was a natural leader who was very good at everything he did and he thought your mother would swoon over him like all the other girls did."

"Mum didn't like that?" Harry asked.

"That is an understatement. She despised him, especially since her best friend at the time was your father's favorite target to bully."

"Bully? My father was a bully?"

Remus sighed and looked down as he contemplated what to tell Harry. "Maybe I shouldn't have said that, but yes, sometimes your father was a bit...immature. At times we all were a bit immature."

"But Snivellus deserved it." Sirius spoke up. "Mostly anyway."

"Snivellus? Severus?" Harry asked incredulously. "Snape was my mother's best friend?"

"Yes they were best friends up until the fifth year or so." Sirius said. "They grew up together. Friends before they ever came to Hogwarts. I remember seeing them on the train for the first time. It was instant dislike between your father, me and Severus."

Harry whole belief in what he knew about his parents was disappearing fast. His father was an arrogant bully and his mother was best friends with someone who hated Harry's guts. "What...What happened in the fifth year? You said they were friends until then."

Remus looked at Sirius and both studied the ground for a while before Remus finally spoke up. "James...well we had just finished our OWLs and well..." His voice trailed off as he found it hard to tell the tale. He glanced over at Sirius.

"James and I started picking on Severus. Pretty severely actually." Sirius continued the story. "Lily came to Severus' defense and Snape, embarrassed by his predicament, called her a mudblood."

"Her best friend called her a mudblood?" Hermione asked. She'd been called that name too many times for it to bother her too much, but could not imagine someone like Harry or Ron using the vile word.

"They'd probably started growing apart before then. " Remus replied. "Severus had a group of Slytherins he kept with while Lily had her own friends. But yes, he did call her that name and she never really forgave him after that."

"So if my mother hated my father so much how did..."

"James changed." Remus replied. "He became the man who your mother grew to love. As I said, whatever your father wanted to do, he did well. When he decided he wanted to be a better man, he made himself the best man anyone could ask for. He wanted to prove to your moth...no that's not a right; he wanted to be the man worthy of your mother." Remus wiped an eye clear with a sleeve of his shabby robe. "You know Harry; you are the best of both of your parents. You have your mother's heart and your father's determination."

"I...I'm not anyone special." Harry said.

"Harry, you're talking to the man who watched you as third year conquer a charm that a lot of adult witches and wizards can't do just so he wouldn't let his Quidditch team down." Remus replied. "You then used that charm to dispatch over a hundred Dementors. I can't even do that Harry. Trust me, when you truly want to do something, you have it in you to do it. That is James' determination in you. When you develop his confidence, you will be a force to reckon with.

"I.." was all Harry could say so he just nodded at his father's friend.

"You are special Harry." Hermione said.

"I promised Gabrielle I would take her flying tonight." Harry said finally to change the subject. "It's a new moon and it's going to be nothing but stars in the sky."

"I want to go with you sometime soon 'Arry." Fleur said and then she looked at Hermione.

"I don't really like brooms." She said, "But maybe with you Harry, if you promise none of the wild flying you do."

"Do I really have to promise love? The broom just likes to fly."

"We'll see, but you do have to promise to stop if ask you too." Hermione insisted.

"That I will promise."

"How does that Firebolt fly Harry?" Sirius asked.

"Like a dream Sirius." Harry replied. "Best present ever."

"You know that's the second broom I bought for you." Sirius asked.

"What do you mean?"

"I bought you your first broom as well. A toy one for your first birthday." Sirius replied. "Lily sent me a picture of you flying on it. She said you almost killed the cat."

Again Harry felt the sadness wash over him as he thought of a childhood that he could have had. He remembered the children flying their toy brooms at the World Cup campground and he visualized himself as a toddler flying one as well with his parents keeping a close eye on him and a cat running around either chasing or being chased.

Later that evening when the sun had set and the stars were out, Harry and Gabrielle were soaring slightly above the waters of Black Lake with Gabrielle seated in front of Harry. Harry kept one hand on the broom and another around her waist. The air had a slight damp chill to it but the warming spell Fleur had taught them quickly dissipated the cold. The stars flooded the sky over their heads as the only external lights came from the castle and the Durmstrang ship. As Harry glanced at the ship once while passing he thought he could see Krum watching them from the bow of the ship.

Harry did a few lazy slow laps around the lake and just as Gabrielle was relaxing into Harry, he pushed his firebolt to full speed sending Gabrielle back against his chest. Her shrieks of surprise quickly turned into laughter as she enjoyed the rush of emotions Harry was experiencing being on his broom and being with her. He pushed his broom through twist and turns enjoying the rush of excitement. A little later he slowed the broom back down to a leisurely pace. It was sometime later when they landed on the shores of the lake and Harry conjured the bluebell flames Hermione had taught him. In the dancing flame light Harry and Gabrielle enjoyed some quiet time together lying next to each other staring at the stars.

Once a week Harry would take one of his bond mates up flying and then spend the rest of the evening just with that lady. Even Hermione started enjoying flying when she was being held by Harry. It did take her quite some time to finally open her eyes the first time.

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April gave way to May and Remus finally started selling the parts of the Basilisk. They were selling the skin through Fletcher (at a fair price) and everything else through Remus's friend. Fleur asked that some of parts be stored in the potions lab in the secret chamber just in case they needed it in the future.

It had now been over two months and no one had come up with a plan to get the map from Moody. His office was protected by some very nasty wards which prevented anyone from looking in there even when they knew he was gone.

"I'm sorry Sirius." Harry said one evening. "I wish I'd never let him have the map. You're stuck down here because of it."

"I'm fine Harry." Sirius replied. "I'm getting to spend more time with my Godson than I ever thought possible and this place is a lot better than that cave I was in earlier. The end of the school year is less than two months away and he'll have to give it to you then."

"Where will you go this summer?"

"Not sure. I might head back to the sandy beaches of a southern shore to stretch my legs for a bit. If Mr. Delacour has any luck then I'll come back and hopefully spend some time with you. Maybe you, I and your girlfriends can travel a bit at the end of the summer. We might even take the mangy werewolf with us." The last said with a grin at his old friend.

"I'll show you mangy, you overgrown puppy." Remus shot back.

"I'd like that Sirius." Harry replied.

As the month continued on Harry remembered that Gabrielle's birthday would be at the end of the month and realized a problem of the bond. He couldn't buy something and surprise her with it. Then he remembered that Mr. Delacour was arriving soon. He realized he could ask him since he would have had the same problem.

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May 15th 1995

Mr. Delacour arrived on a beautiful Saturday afternoon. After giving his daughters a hug including Hermione he shook Harry's hand.

"Zis information I 'ave for you. We need somewhere private. Should be go to your 'eadmaster's office?"

A uninformed cry of 'no' and 'non' erupted from the four students. When Mr. Delacour looked puzzled, Fleur explained. "Papa, 'e is ze reason we are asking about zis subject. We 'ave somewhere to go and we'll explain when we get zere."

Hermione went first to warn Sirius to transform into Padfoot and Harry and the Delacours followed. When they entered the girl's bathroom on the second floor he was very puzzled, but when his youngest daughter hissed at a wall and it disappeared (Gabrielle had picked up the parseltongue phrase along the way) he entered the world of being very shocked.

"Children, what is going on?" He asked.

"You were told of the Chamber of Secrets, and now you get to see what it looks like." Harry explained. "We've been using it as sort of a place to get together."

"But 'ow did Gabrielle do zat? It sounded like parseltongue."

"It was." Harry replied. "Guess I shouldn't mention you have a talented tongue to your father?" He thought to Gabrielle who instantly blushed.

"Yours isn't so bad either love, but no, maybe it would not be ze best zing to say to Papa."

"It's something we learned we could do with ze bond." Fleur explained. "You and Maman don't learn from each other zings with ze bond? We've been using it to teach each other spells."

"We never zought to do it." Mr. Delacour said, "But I can see zat it works. You mother and I will discuss zis when I get back 'ome."

"Eet works very well." Fleur replied. "When we get to ze Chamber I will show you ze first zing I learned from 'Arry."

"What ees all zis stuff?" Mr. Delacour asked when he saw the skins and bottles of venom and blood.

"Basilisk parts." Harry replied. "Professor Dumbledore gave me the rights to the Basilisk and we are selling them."

Alain looked at the stack of meter section skins and bottle after bottle of venom and blood and let out a soft whistle.

"Papa we are 'oping you can 'elp us find someone to invest ze money for us." Fleur said.

"Us?"

"'Arry insisted Gabrielle, 'ermione and I share ze money. We tried to tell 'im no but..."

" 'ow much money is it?"

Fleur pulled out a little book and opened it. At Remus's insistence, she had been keeping track of the current prices and the amounts sold and to be sold. "It will probably end up being a little over zree million galleons when it's finished but we'll need to pay about ten percent for ze rendering and ze selling."

Mr. Delacour stopped walking and looked at his daughter. "Zree Million?" He turned to Harry, "And you just shared with my daughters?"

"No sir, I am sharing it with my family who just happened to be your daughters." Harry replied. "I want to give some of it to a couple of other people, but most of it will be ours to share."

They entered the Chamber and Hermione and Remus were waiting for them. Remus looked extremely peaked. That evening was going to be a full moon.

"It's a pleasure to meet you sir." Remus said when introductions had been made. "I've been looking forward to it ever since I found out who you were."

"My daughters 'ave written 'igh praise of you Mr. Lupin."

"Remus or Moony please. I'm just happy to be of help."

"Moo...ah...I presume a play on your Lycanthropy?"

"Yes sir. Harry's father gave me that nickname. We were good friends when we went here."

"I'm glad you were willing to see me today. I know it's a tough day for you."

"I wouldn't miss the opportunity. Fortunately, I am able to take the Wolfsbane potion while I'm here."

"So you and James Potter were friends? So you are familiar with Mr. Brown then." Mr. Delacour said with a smile, especially when he saw the confused look cross Remus' face. "I zought so, but zat just proves it I believe." He looked over at Padfoot. "Mr. Black I presume? I am 'ere as my daughter's father not in any official capacity. Even if I was, I would 'ave no issue with you."

Everyone in the Chamber was staring at Mr. Delacour. He turned to Fleur as said. "Your mother might be smarter zan I am, but I didn't get to where I am by missing many zings. Zough I admit I didn't make ze connection until I was back 'ome. Mr. Brown mentioned 'e was a good friend of 'Arry's father, in fact 'e made it seem like 'e was James Potter's best friend. But when I did a little research on Mr. Black, I found 'e also was a very good friend of Monsieur Potter including best man at 'is wedding. But nowhere was there anything about a Mr. Brown." At the startled look on Harry's face Mr. Delacour explained. "I mentioned to you zat everything will be discovered when I ask for a full investigation. Zis was only a preliminary one done by my staff, but my staff is very good." He turned back to the black dog still staring at him. "I also realized just how well your dog behaved, almost like 'e knew exactly what was being said. I put ze zings together and realized Mr. Brown was most likely Mr. Black and 'e was ze dog as well, an unregistered animagus." He turned to his eldest daughter. "Ma petite, I swear I mean Mr. Black no 'arm. I know you believe he is innocent and zat is good enough for me."

" 'E won't tell 'Arry." Fleur said.

"Sirius, I believe him." Harry said and at that Padfoot became Sirius Black. Harry turned to Mr. Delacour. "Sir, I would like for you to meet my Godfather."

"Nice to meet you Mr. Black."

"Sirius please."

"Alain."

"Thank you sir for being willing to help me this summer."

Mr. Delacour shrugged. "I would 'ope I would be willing to 'elp any innocent man, but zis is a special case. Your godson is now a member of my family. You zink I would stand a chance against my daughters if I did not 'elp?" The last he asked with a smile.

Sirius smiled. "I guess not. I've had the opportunity to get to know them over the last couple of months. They are very special young women."

Alain smiled "Yes zey are. Just like zeir mother. 'Opefully you'll be able to meet 'er zis summer as yourself. Once we push for your trial, you are more zan welcome to come stay at our 'ome. I will be able to grant you Asylum until ze trial starts. Zat should give you time to work with a Solicitor on preparing your defense and still spend time with your godson."

Sirius appeared speechless until he was able to get out "Thank you again sir."

"Don't zank me until you are free." Alain said. "You still 'ave a large 'ill to climb. Your family name isn't going to 'elp you at your trial. Speaking of your family," He reached into his robes and pulled out several sheets of parchment. "I wasn't sure if I would 'ave a chance to meet you today, but in case I did, I zought zis might 'elp you. As you can see, your family fortune is still mostly intact and you are ze legal 'eir as soon as you can appear publicly and claim it. Zat will be as soon as your ministry admits you 'aven't 'ad a trial. Zat will allow you to access funds to 'ire your solicitor."

"How did you get these? The goblins are notorious about not giving out information."

Again Mr. Delacour shrugged, "Ze Veela are on much better terms with ze Goblins zan wizards are. So with a few galleons 'ere and zere from ze right person, information can be obtained. It's not something I would normally do, but I was sure you wouldn't mind."

"Why did you do all of this?" Sirius asked. "Not that I am complaining."

"As I said, 'Arry is family now and zat means you're family Mr. Black." Mr. Delacour said. "Besides it makes my daughters 'appy." He then turned to Remus. "Mr. Lupin..Remus. As I said earlier, my eldest 'as written 'igh praise of you. She also made a request..."

"I just want to say, I am not looking for any charity sir."

"So my daughter tells me. I do 'ave something in mind zat I zink you would be perfect for. Let me tell you about it and you tell me if you are interested. Of course I would still need to interview you in depth and verify your background but zis is a start." When Lupin nodded, he continued. "As you know we repealed several restrictive legislations on werewolves over ze last couple of years." Again Lupin nodded. "Ever since zen many British Lycanthropy sufferers 'ave wanted to immigrate to France. Ze problem we're 'aving is determining who is a good fit for our country and who isn't."

"And you're thinking of me to help in that process?"

"Yes. I need someone who is familiar with ze British werewolf population, someone who knows who wants to live peacefully and who wants to afflict others with ze disease." Mr. Delacour said. "I would expect ze person also to work with ze people who immigrate to 'elp zem settle in. I can keep 'elping ze werewolves as long as zere are not any problems. But if we get a rash of aggressive werewolves immigrating into ze country, ze laws will be back in place very quickly."

"It sounds like a great opportunity sir." Remus said.

"Excellent. Zough I would like you to zink on it. When you are confident you are truly interested, forward your CV via my daughter and I will personally set up the formal interview."

"I'll do that sir."

"Zen I 'ope we meet again real soon." Mr. Delacour said holding out his hand to Remus who shook it. He then turned to Harry and his three daughters (including Hermione.) "Now do you want to discuss what I came 'ere for, or is zere some place better?"

They showed him into Slytherin's personal library. When they got there he immediately asked. "Ees zere a reason you do not wish ze 'Eadmaster to know what I'm 'ere for?"

"Yes sir." Hermione replied. "He's the one that started our search of this information to start with." She started explaining about the journal and the books Professor Dumbledore took with him. When she finished, Mr. Delacour pulled a small book out of his robes and handed it to Fleur. "I would prefer to not leave zis. If someone else reads it I would feel responsible."

"If you do want to leave it, we can put it in here." Hermione replied. "There are now only five people who can get in here, and four of them are us and the other is Tom Riddle who we think already knows about what the book covers anyway."

Mr. Delacour looked around the library. "Zis might be a better option. I'll leave it with you. Just please do not share zat information."

"Mr. Delacour?" Harry said. "Can I speak to you in private?" He turned to his bond mates. "No listening or you'll be waking up to aragog tomorrow." It was an empty threat because all of his bondmates knew he would never do that to them. but they gave him his privacy.

"Sir, how do you buy presents for your wife?" Harry asked. "I mean surprising her. Gabrielle's birthday is in a couple of weeks and..."

"Son, you're a fine man who I'm glad my daughters found. Very zoughtful." Alain said. "My first time buying Apolline a present after ze bonding was a disaster. I zought I could 'ide it from 'er but she got it out of me very quickly and I never realized it until to late. For ze next couple of times after zat, I 'ad a friend buy ze present. I told 'im what I generally was looking for and 'e did 'is best but it still wasn't perfect. 'E didn't know my Apolline like I did. Zen finally I found zis." Mr. Delacour reached into another pocket of his robes and pulled out a small vial of purplish liquid. "Drink zis and for one 'our your bond mate will not be able to read your zoughts, and when it's over you won't remember ze time either. Zough ze whole time it's in effect you are still you. You can pick out ze present you want and zen forget what you got 'er."

"Wow. That sounds perfect sir." Harry exclaimed.

"Just make sure zere is someone you trust with you." Mr. Delacour said. "You might need to know what 'appened if you get into any kind of trouble."

"Any other advise?"

"Only one, Don't buy ze presents to early. I once bought my wife 'er birthday present and zen bought 'er anniversary gift a week later. I ended up buying 'er ze exact same pair of earrings for both." Mr. Delacour's eyes twinkled as he continued. "She still reminds me of zat to zis day." He handed Harry the vial and promised to give him more during the summer before Fleur's birthday in August.

After a while longer Mr. Delacour departed Hogwarts and the bond mates all returned to the Chamber library. They soon all discovered exactly what a Horcrux was and how one is made. It was only Sirius yelling that they needed to head upstairs before the moon came out that forced them to leave the library.

A/N: Well they know what a Horcrux is now. Next chapter I want to get all the way to the start of the third task, but it might take two chapters to get there.

Chapter 22

"The soul is split by the act of murder...."

"A complex and powerful spell afterwards is used to take a part of the soul and place it...."

"While a horcrux exists the soul fragment anchors...."

"A Horcrux should be stored where it will never be found, as it can affect those people who..."

These are some of the phrases that were read and mentally repeated between the bond mates as they discussed horcruxes over the next few days. Now that they knew what a Horcrux was and what they were used for, the bond mates understood why Professor Dumbledore was trying to contain the information. The promise of immortality was too much of an enticement for some. Even the wizards who didn't have enough magic to create a Horcrux, might commit the murders just to try. The bond mates did speculate on several things such as when Riddle might have created a Horcrux and what he might have put his in. It was several days later when Harry was entering the Chamber with the three young women that a fragment of memory came back to him. As he gazed at that giant statue of Salazar Slytherin and remembered Ginny laying between the feet, a memory returned from that time two years past as the young Tom Riddle spoke to him,

"Ginny poured out her soul to me, and her soul happened to be exactly what I wanted...."

Powerful enough to start feeding Miss Weasley a few of my secrets, to start pouring a little of my soul back into her. . ."

"His soul!" Harry thought. "Riddle's soul!" The mental shout made each of his bond mates stop in their tracks and look at him. "Sorry, but I think I know what Riddle's Horcrux is or I mean was." Harry said. "The diary."

"The dia... oh you mean Riddle's diary?" Hermione asked. Suddenly she felt as if her hands were dirty as she remembered holding the book in question when Harry showed it to her after he found it in

Myrtle's bathroom. She found herself unconsciously wiping them on her robes.

"Yes! Remember the memory of him talking to me. When he was saying how he possessed Ginny he said he started pouring his soul back into her. Books don't have souls do they?"

"But can a Horcrux do zat?" Gabrielle asked.

"The book said it can influence those who come in contact with it." Hermione reminded the young witch.

"But if zat's ze case, zen 'e is gone for good?" Fleur asked. " 'E 'as no soul anchor so 'is soul should be gone now?"

"I...I don't know." Harry replied. "My scar.." Harry's hand rose to his forehead where the scar that made him famous rested. He could still imagine the pain that had awoken him that summer morning.

"It did hurt during the past summer didn't it?" Hermione replied.

"What is zis about 'is scar 'urting and why is it important?" Fleur asked. She was reminded once again how much Hermione has been a part of Harry's life for so many years. She knew so much about the man, their bond mate they both loved. It wasn't she was jealous of their relationship but only that she couldn't wait for the day she knew just as much about Harry as her bond sister did.

"It sometime hurts when Voldemort is near me," Harry explained, "but not always. It hurt the first time he was facing me through Quirrell's turban, but when he faced me when I had the philosopher's stone it didn't hurt until Quirrell actually touched me."

" 'Ow does your scar know when Voldemort is around? And are you saying 'e was around you zis summer? 'Ow? Where?" Fleur was confused. Though Harry had told her of his adventures, and she had relived some of the memories, it was the details like this get left out; and some of these details confused her.

"I don't know. It just does. " Harry replied. "As for this summer, I had a dream or something where I saw him and Wormtail. At least that's what I thought I saw and they were plotting to kill...." He looked at

Hermione knowing he didn't tell her the whole truth the last time he mentioned it but this time she picked up the thought instantly.

"YOU! You told Ron and me it was just someone! You didn't say it was you they were plotting to kill." She exclaimed as she glared at him. "WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US?"

"I didn't tell you because you were already upset and I didn't want to upset you more." Harry replied honestly.

"Did you ever mention it to Professor Dumbledore especially in light of the fact that someone entered you into this tournament?"

"I can't tell Professor Dumbledore, what if it was just a dream? I can't go running to the Headmas...."

"He already knows your scar hurt during the summer." The voice of Harry's godfather interrupted. "I told him when you told me Harry. Though he doesn't know the dream since you didn't bother telling me that part either." At the look on his Godson's face, Sirius continued, "You can be pissed at me all you want Harry, but my first concern is for your safety. I failed you thirteen years ago. I'll be damned if I let anything else happen to you if I can help it."

"But what if it was just a dream?"

"Then it was a dream but Dumbledore would want to know the details surrounding the pain in your scar. I am surprised he didn't ask you already." Sirius said. "You need to tell him about what you saw Harry."

The statement by Sirius was immediately echoed by his bond mates and Harry reluctantly agreed.

Fleur was still puzzled about the pain in the scar. "Did ze 'eadmaster explain why 'Arry's scar might 'urt around Voldemort?" she asked Sirius.

"No he didn't."

"Maybe you should ask your Madam Pomfrey." She suggested to Harry. "Or 'ave you already asked 'er?"

"No, this past summer was the first time it hurt since the end of the first year so I really didn't think about it." Harry replied. "I..I really don't want to talk to anyone about my scar. I don't like it. I know you are concerned but understand that when I look in a mirror and see it, it reminds me of my parents dying. It reminds me that people look at it, before they look at me." His voice lowered to only a whisper, "It reminds me of everything that hurts in my life." He sat down at the table and pulled out one of his books and quickly opened it. Not even looking at what page he was on or even what book it was, he started reading.

All three Bond mates looked at each other and all of them had looks of sadness cross their faces. Each of them had started thinking of the scar as a separate entity and not what it meant to Harry. As they talked silently to themselves, they reminded themselves even though they had had a couple of wonderful months; Harry still had scars that they couldn't see. They hoped that time and love would eventually heal them.

"I'm sorry Harry." Hermione said as she walked over to him. "You're right. We..well we were just thinking of the scar and not what it means to you." She sat down beside him and with a gentle touch turned his face to look at her. "We are sorry love. We won't talk about it anymore; just promise us that you'll tell Dumbledore about the dream and if the scar hurts again."

Harry just nodded then turned back to his book.

The talk about his scar, Voldemort and Horcruxes stopped at that time. Harry withdrew into himself and the women gave him space for a while. Though he never turned the page of his book, he never looked up from it either. As each of his bond mates peeked in his thoughts they could see various things as they ran through Harry's mind. Everything that scar meant to him, the sight of his parents in the Mirror of Erised and in the photo album Hagrid gave to him, the voice of his mother begging for his life, the green light of the killing curse bright in his eyes as an infant, and the people gawking at him. His bond mates sent their love of him over the bonds. Harry finally looked up as he realized the scar might represent what he had lost, but the love he felt from the three women who were there with him represented what life was giving him. "Thank you." He thought gently to his bond mates. They joined him at the table, each with a hug for him and a small tender kiss.

%%% May 22 1995 %%%

Harry didn't go right away to see the Headmaster as his bond mates wanted. He just wanted to forget about the scar again. So for the next few days he always found a reason to not go. The days slipped by until it was the weekend before Gabrielle's birthday. It was also a Hogsmeade weekend. Harry knew this was the time to go get Gabrielle's present.

"Just make sure there is someone you trust with you." Harry remembered the words of Mr. Delacour. That meant only one person this time and that was Mooney. He had done a mental inventory of the people he could ask to accompany him, he thought of the twins and realized that would be a mistake. Telling them that he wouldn't remember anything after the hour would guarantee a prank of enormous proportions. Neville and Ginny didn't know about the bond so wouldn't understand the need for the potion, Ron of course was definitely out. That only left Remus. Who readily agreed to the task. Harry told his bond mates to expect him to 'disappear' and promised to meet them in Hogsmeade in over an hour.

As he entered Hogsmeade, Harry reached into his robes and pulled out the vial of purple liquid. "Here goes." He thought and downed the potion.

The next memory Harry had was of the Headmaster's office. He was sitting across from Professor Dumbledore and he was surrounded by Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione all with looks of concern on their faces. Remus was in a chair off to the side.

"Now Harry can you tell me one more time what you saw?" Dumbledore was saying.

"Saw? What do you mean?" Harry replied shaking his head in confusion. "When? What?"

"The potion Papa gave 'im as worn off 'eadmaster." Fleur said seeing the look of confusion in Harry's eyes.

"What's going on? What happened?" Harry asked very confused as he looked around the room. His eyes fell on Remus. "Did I do something wrong?"

"According to Remus and what you told us before the potion wore off," Dumbledore started explaining. "You had some kind of vision of Voldemort."

"We were coming out of..of a store where you bought a gift." Remus said and Harry started patting his pocket. "I have the bag safely tucked away." Remus said then continued. "You suddenly started clutching your scar and collapsed as you started saying something about Wormtail. It was several minutes before you were lucid again. After you started telling me what you had seen, I realized it was something the Headmaster should know and I brought you here immediately. We came across the young women along the way and they, of course accompanied us."

"What did I say?" Harry asked as his hand felt the scar on his forehead. Now that Remus had mentioned it, he could still feel a slight burning coming from it but fading quickly.

"You told me you saw Wormtail and Voldemort." Dumbledore said. "That Tom was punishing Peter with the Cruciatus Curse for letting something escape and he was threatening to feed Peter to Nagini."

"Nagini? Voldemort's snake?" Harry asked as the name came back from the earlier summer dream. "Please tell me wormtail is snake food."

"You remember the snake's name? I was under the impression that you wouldn't remember anything."

"From my....an earlier dream that I had in the summer." Harry replied hesitantly as he looked at his bond mates.

Dumbledore leaned forward in his chair and stared at Harry over his half moon glasses. "When your scar hurt? When you wrote Sirius? There was another one of these visions then?"

"Yes sir."

"Tell him Harry." Hermione said.

Harry looked at her and shrugged, turning back to Dumbledore he said. "In the dream I had in the summer, Wormtail and Voldemort

were discussing some kind of plan to kill....kill me and there was an old man there, a muggle at least I think that was murdered."

Dumbledore's gaze sharpened on Harry. "To kill you Harry? Are you certain?"

"I think so sir, but it was only a dream or do you believe these things are real?"

Dumbledore face was a mask of concentration as he looked at Harry then at every other person in the room before he finally answered the question. "It is possible," said Dumbledore. "I would say - probable. What bothers me the most is that you said in this latest vision he was performing a curse on Wormtail."

"Why does that bother you sir?"

"How did he do it without a body for he had to hold a wand to perform that curse."

"But how?"

"How?" muttered Dumbledore. "How indeed is the question."

"But why am I getting these dreams or whatever they are now? Is he getting stronger?"

"Voldemort?" Dumbledore asked giving Harry the piercing gaze that made Harry feel he could see right through him. "I can only give you my suspicions for I have no proof Harry, but yes I do believe he is." The Headmaster sighed and looked much older, and wearier, than ever.

"The years of Voldemort's ascent to power," he said as he looked again at Harry and the women around him, "were marked with disappearances. Bertha Jorkins, an employee with the Ministry.."

"I remember the Weasleys talking about her." Hermione said then realized she had just interrupted the Headmaster. "Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt."

"That's quite alright Miss Granger, but as I was saying Ms. Jorkins has vanished without a trace in the place where Voldemort was

certainly known to be last and there was another disappearance that no one is interested in because he is a Muggle. His name was Frank Bryce, he lived in the village where Voldemort's father grew up, and he has not been seen since last August. Two disappearances in places associated with Voldemort. They could be a coincidence but I think not especially now that I know you saw Voldemort kill a muggle about the same time Bryce was last seen. Again could be a coincidence, but very unlikely."

Then because of mental nudge from Fleur Harry asked. "And do you know why my scar hurts?"

"I have a theory, no more than that." The Headmaster answered after another contemplative look. "It is my belief that your scar hurts both when Lord Voldemort is near you, and when he is feeling a particularly strong surge of hatred."

"But. . . why?"

"Because when the curse failed on that night many years ago, I think it left a connection between you and Tom." said Dumbledore. "That is no ordinary scar."

Harry's hand again went immediately to his forehead. "Connection to Voldemort?" He looked at his bondmates, expecting to see and feel horror at what they were themselves connected to, but only saw three ladies with looks of concern and love.

"So you think because something escaped Voldemort was angry enough for me to feel it?" Harry asked.

"I hoped and still do hope that your bond will protect you from the connection with Tom in some fashion." Professor Dumbledore replied. "From what little Miss Delacour said about the potion her father gave you, I would hazard a guess that not only did it prevent the bond from protecting you but might have actually made your mind more susceptible to the emotions of Voldemort."

"How..he wouldn't do anything like that."

"Oh don't think I am suggesting he gave it to you with that intent. I apologize if it seemed that way. No, Alain Delacour is a very good man." Dumbledore smiled at the two Delacours. "Again I must say

that I am guessing, but the way Professor Berceau described how your bond would protect your mind I would presume it has taken over the protections your mind had already formed to protect you from Voldemort as well. So when the potion interfered with the Veela bond and the protection it offers, it probably left you very susceptible to the connection with Tom." Dumbledore looked at Harry over his half moon glasses. "I highly recommend you not take that potion again. For Mr. Delacour it does what he needs it to do, but for you Harry, it could be very very dangerous."

"Yes sir." Harry replied softly though he was having a hard time swallowing the lump in his throat. "I just wanted to get you a present Angel."

"And I'm sure you did a wonderful job of eet." Gabrielle replied and he felt a surge of love over the bond.

"Well if that is all..." Dumbledore started as an obvious dismissal.

"Should we ask about ze 'orcrux while we are here?" Fleur asked Harry and her Bond Sisters.

"He obviously didn't want us to know, but we know now." Hermione responded. "Would it get your father in trouble for giving us the book?"

"We don't 'ave to tell 'im where we got ze information. 'E already knows about zem so zat's not a problem."

Harry could feel Hermione's reluctance and was about to suggest just leaving when he felt her resolve strengthen and she replied. "Ok, let's ask."

"Sir, may we ask a question? We 'ave been researching what a 'orcrux..." Fleur started but that was as far as she got as Dumbledore's eyes sharpened and he had his wand up far more quickly than someone his age should be able to react. Harry bolted out of his chair with reflexes that spoke of his seeker abilities, placing himself directly between Fleur and Dumbledore, but a second later, he relaxed as he heard the familiar clicks as the door to the office was being locked. Once he saw the Headmaster put the wand back on his desk, he returned to his seat.

Fleur had been startled as the Headmaster had lifted his wand and had made no effort to defend herself. She looked over at her bond mate as she realized he had instinctively defended her by putting himself between the Headmaster and her. She couldn't help but feel happy at the thought.

Dumbledore's eyes had lost their weariness as he focused on the group of youngsters in front of him with a gaze that was almost cold from his now ice blue eyes. "Where did you hear that word?" He asked curtly. All pleasantries had left his voice. He then remembered the Chamber and he looked at Hermione. "I presume you were the one? You needed to know?"

Near panic was coursing through Hermione as the Headmaster stern gaze was locked on her. "What do we do?"

"We've done nothing wrong sister." Fleur said to Hermione and then to Dumbledore. "Sir, you have no right to take zat tone with 'Ermione. We researched a term zat we 'eard. We are students zat is what we are suppose to do."

Dumbledore's eyes turned to Fleur, all grandfatherly twinkles missing from his blue eyes. "Who else knows about this? Have you told anyone else?"

Fleur held the gaze of the Headmaster. "Why do you need to know sir?" She asked and then was out of her chair in an instant. "And if zat is legilimency I sense, you better 'ave a good reason, or my next destination is Madam Maxine and a owl or floo call to my father."

Two sets of blue eyes were locked on each other. Dumbledore's against Fleur's. Harry had to admire his older bond mate. She wasn't afraid of the Headmaster. He thought it must be because she had so much experience dealing with high ranking government people her father worked with. To Harry's surprise Dumbledore caved first. The Headmaster finally leaned back in his chair again. "My apologies Miss Delacour. Please sit back down. I had no right to do what I did, but your mind is very much closed to my attempts anyway as are all of you. The protection provided by your bond makes legilimency impossible, at least passively. It was instinctive on my part to do it and again I apologize." Dumbledore's face returned to the look of weariness it had had before. Then he let out a sigh before continuing. "That is a term I've been trying to research for some time

now while at the same time remove as much knowledge of them as possible. Understand my concern when four," his eyes flicked over to Remus as he realized he didn't look surprised, "or five people now know about them."

Harry put his hand on Fleur's arm. "It's alright. Sit down please my flower."

" 'E's still 'iding something." Fleur thought but sat back down and gave Harry a small smile.

"Sir." Harry said to the Headmaster, "We've discussed it only in the Chamber or over our bond. We four, Remus and Sirius are the only ones who know what we know." He decided that Mr. Delacour wasn't about to mention it to anyone and the Headmaster didn't need to know about him anyway.

Dumbledore gazed at the four young people in front of him. They had unraveled a secret that he had tried to bury from the world. He wondered how they knew what they knew. "Did I miss a book in Slytherin's library?" He wondered. He continued to look at them. They all looked so very young, and for them to have that knowledge put them in extreme danger. His mind raced over several possibilities of what to do. "If I dismiss them outright, they will continue to research it I am sure." He momentarily looked at his wand, "I'm not sure what an oblivation spell would do with their bond. It might not work at all or cause issues I'm not aware of." As he looked up he saw Remus's eyes locked on him as if he knew what he was thinking. "And if it failed or if they found out I would lose all of Harry's trust and never get it back." Dumbledore realized he had very few options at the moment. He brought his fingers up and put them together as he continued to think of the possibilities. The words of Lupin from earlier in the year came back to him, "He's not eleven anymore." Dumbledore's gaze wandered to the young man before continuing his contemplations, "But he isn't ready for the prophecy. That's too much of a burden. Next year or the next will be better, when he's better prepared mentally for it." Finally Dumbledore realized his best course of action was honesty but not necessarily the whole truth. His gaze moved from person to person before he continued. "Please make sure you do not tell anyone else. As I said, I've been trying to remove as much knowledge of Horcruxes as I can."

"Sir we understand your desire to remove the knowledge." Hermione replied as her mind started calming down. "It started out by us only wanting to know what a Horcrux was. Then when we found out, we realized it was possibly the way Voldemort survived that night against Harry. I hope you can understand that anything that concerns Harry now concerns us."

"I can understand your academic curiosity and the need to know for the personal reasons." Dumbledore said as his blue eyes regained their warmth. "At your age I would have pursued the academic challenge as well I'm sure. No, in this case I should blame myself. I should have realized what might occur and done something besides just ignoring your question that day in the Chamber. I should've attempted to dissuade you at that time from pursuing the topic, but alas that is water under the bridge as you might say."

"Yes sir, so we are right in that it was a Horcrux that kept him alive?"

"Yes. It definitely appears that is how he stayed alive that night."

"Do you know if the Horcrux was the diary that Ginny had?" Hermione asked.

Dumbledore had to give them credit. He had immediately suspected the object to be a Horcrux after Harry had described what had happened, but he had been studying Horcruxes for several years. The young people before him had done the same thing in just a few weeks. "What makes you think it was?" He asked wanting to know what had led to their conclusion.

"Riddle mentioned that he gave some of his soul back to Ginny." Harry explained. "He used the word soul and since we were talking about storing part of Riddle's soul, it only made sense."

"Very well reasoned and yes that Diary was a Horcrux." Dumbledore replied.

"So why isn't 'e dead?" Fleur asked. "If 'is orcrux was destroyed, why isn't 'e dead?"

"You've done a very good job so far in your reasoning, why would you think he's not dead?" Dumbledore questioned.

They sat and thought for a few minutes before Hermione murmured "He couldn't do that."

"He couldn't do what Miss Granger? Remember that this is Tom Riddle who is capable of doing most anything."

"Well sir, I thought for a second considering all the people he has murdered, what if he made more than one Horcrux, but that would..I mean it can't be."

"I recently came across something that makes me think that is exactly what he did. I believe Tom Riddle created more than one Horcrux. How many he might have created is still the question."

"But...but it can't be that many can it?"

"I do not know how many parts a soul can be divided into." Dumbledore replied. "But even if he only made two Horcruxes it means his soul is in three parts already."

"No sir. That's not right." Hermione replied and her eyes flew open wide and she blushed as she realized she had just corrected the Headmaster.

Dumbledore looked at the witch for a second before. "Please explain what you mean by that."

Hermione looked embarrassed but explained what she had thought. "Sir, the...I mean our source said when you murdered someone it splits your soul into two pieces. Left alone they will eventually bind back together, but someone intent on making a horcrux would perform the magic required to remove half of the soul and place it in the container they had prepared."

"Yes that is how it works." Dumbledore said.

Hermione thought her next statement was obvious but she said it anyway. "Sir, if you split your soul into two pieces, then in your first horcrux you would have half of your soul, but in your second one you would put only a fourth of your soul. So I guess technically if you made two horcruxes it would be in three parts, but three unequal parts. He would only have a quarter of his soul left to him."

Dumbledore eyes never gave away the inner thoughts that now started growing exponentially. Now that she had said it, it made obvious sense but not something he had considered before. He immediately started thinking of the transformation of the handsome young man Tom Riddle had been into the 'thing' he had become later in life, becoming more snake than man. Dumbledore had presumed Riddle's appearance change had occurred because of the dark arts he had delved into, but now it was possible if not probably that he became what he was or is because he had so little of his soul left. He then looked up from his musings and realized there were five sets of eyes looking at him.

"I think you may be right Miss Granger." Professor Dumbledore replied. "It is something I had not considered."

Hermione blushed at the praise but had an answer to why the Headmaster hadn't considered it. "Sir, I think it's because advanced arithmetic isn't taught in the wizarding world. Fractions are used in potions but only to represent a portion of an ingredient. How they are used in mathematics are never taught as far as I can tell. If I were to ask most of the students in this school who were not taught in muggle schools, what a half of a half is, most of them would answer incorrectly or ask 'half of what?' as if what you were dividing would make a difference. The only mathematics taught here is Arithmancy, and it's the study of whole numbers and the magic they imply whereas..." Her eyes widen as the question that had popped in her mind came flooding out. "Would Riddle have purposely split his soul into...into a magically significant number of pieces?"

Dumbledore internally smiled at the brilliance of Miss Granger, both in her analysis of fraction usage in the magical world and in the deducing what Riddle might have done, but enough information had been shared. "That's an interesting concept Miss Granger." He stood as if to dismiss the others. "As much as I would like to continue this discussion, I have many things to do. Harry if you have any more of these visions please let me know." His eyes moved from person to person, "Remember what we just discussed cannot be shared with anyone. No friends, no relatives, no one."

A chorus of "Yes sir" responded.

"And again Harry." Dumbledore said. "Please refrain from that potion. I think the protection the bond offers is something you really need to have."

"Yes sir."

With that acknowledgment, Harry, Remus and Harry's bond mates left the Headmaster's office. Many questions had been answered but with those answers came many more questions.

The next morning they were all back in the Great Hall eating breakfast when Hermione received her Daily Prophet. She had just unfolded it and looked at the front page when she spat pumpkin juice all over. Then Harry felt a wave of disgust and anger washed over the bond. Before Harry could look over at the paper, Draco Malfoy shouted across the Great Hall from the Slytherin table.

"Hey, Potter! Potter! How's your head? You feeling all right? Sure you're not going to go berserk on us?"

Malfoy was holding a copy of the Daily Prophet too. Slytherins up and down the table were sniggering, twisting in their seats to see Harry's reaction.

Hermione reluctantly handed the paper over to Harry. He found himself staring at his own picture, beneath the banner headline:

"HARRY POTTER "DISTURBED AND DANGEROUS"

The boy who defeated He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named is unstable and possibly dangerous, writes Rita Skeeter, Special Correspondent. Alarming evidence has recently come to light about Harry Potter's strange behavior, which casts doubts upon his suitability to compete in a demanding competition like the Triwizard Tournament, or even to attend Hogwarts School. Potter, the Daily Prophet can exclusively reveal, regularly collapses at school, and is often heard to complain of pain in the scar on his forehead (relic of the curse with which You-Know-Who attempted to kill him). Yesterday in the middle of Hogsmeade, your Daily Prophet reporter witnessed Potter collapse in the middle of the street, saying his scar hurt and he started rambling about You-Know-Who. He was in the company of the Werewolf Remus Lupin at the time.

It is possible, say top experts at St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, that Potters brain was affected by the attack inflicted upon him by You-Know-Who, and that his insistence that the scar is still hurting and having visions of You-Know-Who is an expression of his deep-seated confusion.

"He might even be pretending," said one specialist. "This could be a plea for attention."

The Daily Prophet, however, has unearthed worrying facts about Harry Potter that Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts, has carefully concealed from the wizarding public.

"Potter can speak Parseltongue," reveals Draco Malfoy, a Hogwarts fourth year. "There were a lot of attacks on students a couple of years ago, and most people thought Potter was behind them after they saw him lose his temper at a dueling club and set a snake on another boy. It was all hushed up, though. But he's made friends with werewolves and giants too. We think he'd do anything for a bit of power."

Young Malfoy's statement was very much proven since as earlier indicated, the boy in question was in the company of a werewolf at the time of the incident and I can personally attest the relationship appeared to be one of friendship. As for the Parseltongue, the ability to converse with snakes, has long been considered a Dark Art. Indeed, the most famous Parselmouth of our times is none other than You-Know-Who himself. A member of the Dark Force Defense League, who wished to remain unnamed, stated that he would regard any wizard who could speak Parseltongue "as worthy of investigation. Personally, I would be highly suspicious of anybody who could converse with snakes, as serpents are often used in the worst kinds of Dark Magic, and are historically associated with evildoers." Similarly, "anyone who seeks out the company of such vicious creatures as werewolves and giants would appear to have a fondness for violence."

Albus Dumbledore should surely consider whether a boy such as this should be allowed to compete in the Triwizard Tournament. Some fear that Potter might resort to the Dark Arts in his desperation to win the tournament, the third task of which takes place next month.

"Gone off me a bit, hasn't she?" said Harry lightly, folding up the paper.

Over at the Slytherin table, Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle were laughing at him, tapping their heads with their fingers, pulling grotesquely mad faces, and wagging their tongues like snakes.

It was later when they were in the Chamber of Secrets that Hermione vented her frustration at Rita Skeeter, but now Fleur and Gabrielle's ire at the reporter had risen to match their bond sister.

"Why did it have to happen in front of her?" Hermione cried out in frustration. "She would have to be in that spot at that time."

"She wasn't." Remus said to her. "After how she attacked me last year after it was revealed I was a werewolf, I go to extremes to avoid her. When Harry first collapsed I looked around for help and she was nowhere around. Of that I am very certain. In fact no one really stopped, well outside of that stupid bug that kept trying to land on Harry. I knocked it off several times."

Hermione stopped pacing and a dreamy expression came over her face. She raised her hand and ran it through her hair.

"Hermione? Are you ok?"

"I think I am more than ok." She turned to Remus. "What type of bug was trying to land on Harry, possibly a beetle?"

"Yes." Lupin replied in puzzlement. "I think so. Why?"

"Because I think I know how Skeeter is getting her stories." Hermione replied. "We just need to do some bug hunting."

"Bug hunting?" Harry asked.

"Beetle hunting to be exact." Hermione replied. "I think Rita Skeeter is an unregistered animagus. Remember when she overheard Krum talking to me? He pulled a Beetle from my hair. It was February; beetles are either dormant or dead during the winter months. So how could a Beetle have been in my hair then? That is how she is getting her stories."

Not for the first time, Harry really wished he had the Marauder's map. It would make find Skeeter much easier.

A/N I originally wanted to have some fun with the memory potion. I was going to have his bond mates get upset when he forgets to tell them about taking it and then he disappears from the bond. They were going to get back at him by setting him up with an awkward 'awakening' moment. One where he would spend a great deal of time trying to figure out what happened. I realized though that I needed a way for another vision of Voldemort to get through the mind protection. The potion became my way to do that.

Next chapter is already almost written. You can expect it up by the end of the week. It will cover up to the third task. For those of you following my Future's past story, I'll have another chapter for that story, early next week (I hope).

The next two days after the article appeared Harry was constantly being mocked by the Slytherins. Harry seethed but did nothing when they picked on him, but when Malfoy and his thugs started to pick on Gabrielle as well he couldn't let it go. That night, with the help of Dobby and the twins' special clear liquid, Malfoy, Crabbe and Goyle all had very vivid dreams of crystal clear waterfalls over and over. The next morning the three of them were the laughing stock of the dungeons as Blaise Zabini described the pools of urine in each of their beds. It didn't help that the same thing happened the next night as well. It was sometime before the three of them got a good night sleep as they were all afraid of falling asleep. The very sleepy Slytherins didn't notice the minute amount of powder that was on the handle of the silverware the next morning at breakfast. Five minutes after they started eating though, each came down with the worst case of diarrhea Madam Pomfrey had ever seen. Dobby had also collected the evidence of the pranks and eliminated it. As much as Snape and the Slytherins suspected Potter and his girlfriend, no one could ever prove it. The Slytherins in general started giving Harry and Gabrielle a wide berth.

%%%%%%%% May 27th %%%%%%%%%

Thursday finally arrived. It was Gabrielle's birthday. Harry awoke that morning and immediately sought out his youngest bond mate wondering what she thought of the surprise he had left the night before after she had fallen asleep.

"Good morning Mon Ange." Harry thought.

"ARRY!" Gabrielle's excitement came through in her thoughts. "IT'S BEAUTIFUL!"

Knowing Neville's love of plants, Harry had asked him if there was a flower he could get from the greenhouses for Gabrielle. He recommended a flower that translated into "golden heart of love." It was a pure white flower similar to a rose with the center petals golden in color. "The Golden petals are a common ingredient in most high end love potions." Neville had said. After Gabrielle had went to sleep Harry had put the flower in a vase and put it beside her bed.

"Nothing could ever be as beautiful as you Gabrielle." Harry replied. "Happy birthday. My Angel is fourteen."

"Yes and you know what zat means. You owe me fourteen kisses before breakfast."

"Fourteen kisses? Is that a French custom?"

"Non." Gabrielle replied with a mischievous tone in her thoughts. "It is a tradition for me zough."

"And how many times have you been kissed your birthday age before breakfast?"

"After you finish kissing me zis morning?" Gabrielle replied. "Once."

"Well I'd hate to break such a long standing tradition."

During Transfiguration Harry tried to pay attention but the thoughts of the kisses he and Gabrielle had shared were still fresh in his mind. Gabrielle had made sure she got her birthday's worth from all fourteen of them. As he looked over at Hermione she was doing her best to pay attention as well. After the kisses with Gabrielle had ended, Hermione had been the first to interject, though her thoughts seemed to be a little distracted. "I better get sixteen of those in a few months Harry."

"But I get eighteen of zem in zree months." Fleur had chimed in.

When the class was over, Harry was concerned that he was in trouble when Professor McGonagall held him back after class. But the concern was unfounded when she the subject was something entirely different. "You are to go down to the Quidditch field tonight at nine o'clock. Potter," she told him. "Mr. Bagman will be there to tell the champions about the third task."

"Fleur have you been told? We find out about the third task tonight at nine."

"Madam Maxine just called for me, probably what she is going to tell me as well. At least we will know tonight what we 'ave ahead of us."

As Harry looked back into the stern face of the Transfiguration teacher, she looked like she was going to say something else, but then "Hm...that will be all Mr. Potter." She had seen the distracted

look on Harry and Hermione's faces during the class but ever since the interview with the younger Delacour, she had learned her lesson about asking them about it.

As he was walking out of class he remembered what else was happening at that time. Gabrielle's party was starting at eight. "I'm sorry Angel, Fleur and I are going to miss some of your party."

"It's alright Mon Amour. I'm sure you'll find some way to make it up to me."

Fleur, Harry and Cedric (who had been invited to the part as well) waited until the last minute, but at eight-forty they had to leave the Gryffindor Common room where the party was being held. Fred and George along with Hermione promised to keep it going until they got back.

As they walked down to the pitch they started chatting about what the third task might be, but as they turned and walked between a gap in the stands Cedric stopped and cried indignantly. "What've they done to it?"

The Quidditch field was no longer smooth and flat. It looked as though somebody had been building long, low walls all over it that twisted and crisscrossed in every direction.

"They're hedges!" said Harry, bending to examine the nearest one. He realized this was what he had seen that night he and Gabrielle were flying on Buckbeak.

"Hello there!" called a cheery voice. Ludo Bagman was standing in the middle of the field with Krum by his side.

"Well, what d'you think?" said Bagman happily as Harry, Fleur and Cedric climbed over the last hedge. "Growing nicely, aren't they? Give them a month and Hagrid'll have them twenty feet high. Don't worry," he added, grinning, spotting the less than happy expressions on Harry's and Cedric's faces, "you'll have your Quidditch field back to normal once the task is over! Now, I imagine you can guess what we're making here?"

No one spoke for a moment. Then –

"Maze," grunted Krum.

"That's right!" said Bagman. "A maze. The third task's really very straightforward. The Triwizard Cup will be placed in the center of the maze. The first champion to touch it will receive full marks."

"We seemly 'ave to get zrough ze maze?" asked Fleur.

"There will be obstacles," said Bagman happily, bouncing on the balls of his feet. "Hagrid is providing a number of creatures . . . then there will be spells that must be broken ... all that sort of thing, you know. Now, the champions who are leading on points will get a head start into the maze." Bagman grinned at Harry and Cedric. "Then Miss Delacour will enter . . . then Mr. Krum. But you'll all be in with a fighting chance, depending how well you get past the obstacles. Should be fun, eh?"

Harry, who knew only too well the kind of creatures that Hagrid was likely to provide for an event like this, thought it was unlikely to be any fun at all. He looked over at Fleur "Hagrid likes dangerous animals."

"Yes, Gabrielle 'as mentioned several of zem and others I've seen in your memories." She smiled at her bond mate but Harry could feel her nervousness as she could feel his.

"Very well. . . " Ludo said."If you haven't got any questions, we'll go back up to the castle, shall we, it's a bit chilly. ..."

Bagman hurried alongside Harry as they began to wend their way out of the growing maze. Harry had the feeling that Bagman was going to start offering to help him again and moved closer to Fleur and started chatting with her. They had only walked several feet when Krum tapped Harry on the shoulder.

"Could I haff a vord?"

"Uh..it's my..my girlfriend's party right now, can we talk another time?" Harry replied slightly surprised at the request.

"Girlfriend...but...it vill only take a minute."

Harry looked at Fleur who shrugged. "Want me to go with you?" She queried.

"Yeah, all right," replied Harry to Krum and then to Fleur. "No, I'll be alright, go back to the party, I'll be there shortly."

Harry could tell she wanted to stay near him, but also wanted to go to her sister's party. She finally turned and started toward the Castle with a final "Be careful."

"Vill you valk vith me?" Krum asked Harry.

"Okay," said Harry curiously.

Bagman who was listening and acting like he wanted to talk to Harry looked slightly perturbed.

"I'll wait for you. Harry, shall I?"

"No, it's okay, Mr. Bagman," said Harry, knowing he had guessed correctly about Bagman. "I think I can find the castle on my own, thanks."

Harry and Krum left the stadium together, but Krum did not set a course for the Durmstrang ship. Instead, he walked toward the forest.

"What're we going this way for?" said Harry as they passed Hagrid's cabin and the illuminated Beauxbatons carriage. "Remember I need to get back to the Castle. Gabrielle is waiting for me."

"Don't vont to be overheard," said Krum shortly.

When at last they had reached a quiet stretch of ground a short way from the Beauxbatons horses' paddock, Krum stopped in the shade of the trees and turned to face Harry.

"I vant to know," he said, glowering, "vot there is between you and Hermy-ownninny."

Harry, who from Krum's secretive manner had expected something much more serious than this, stared up at Krum in amazement.

"Uh..well...uh...What do you mean? I mean she's my best friend."

"She spends all of her time with the Beauxbaton Champion. She doesn't come to the library to talk with me as often as she did."

"HERMIONE!" Harry let out a mental yell as this was not a conversation he was comfortable with.

"Yes Harry love?"

"Krum wants to know what's there is between you and me. He thinks you haven't been spending as much time with him. He likes you Hermione." Harry quickly explained but her mental laughter wasn't helping any.

"Outside of the fact that I'm madly in love with you and never had interest in him outside of friendship?"

"But I can't tell him that yet can I?"

"No." She agreed. "Just tell him that I really like him as a friend but felt he wanted more than I wanted."

Harry couldn't believe he was stuck between his bond mate and the International Quidditch star. Here he was asking Harry about the woman Harry loved and he couldn't tell him so. He turned to the Bulgarian seeker, let out an internal sigh and started. "Uh..Victor, well I know that Hermione likes you as a friend, but I think she thinks you might have wanted more than she wanted." Harry let out another internal sigh before continuing with a partial truth. "She is ..uh..she's actually committed into a long term relationship."

"She didn't mention that to me." Krum replied coolly. "In fact she said she wasn't seeing anyone."

Harry was becoming annoyed. He felt like Krum had just called him a liar. The glare his green eyes leveled on Krum caused the Durmstrang Champion to lose his own glare. "It's simple; she wants to be your friend, but only your friend." Harry said. "If you want more than that, it won't happen. Don't take my word for it, ask her."

"I will ask her and we shall see what she says."

"Hermione's is my best friend and a lot more." Harry said with his voice still icily calm. "When you do ask her, do not do anything that might hurt her."

Krum nodded curtly as he stared at Harry for a few more seconds and then he said, "I like you. You say what you think unlike a lot of people." A few seconds of silence fell between the two before Krum continued. "You fly very vell. I vos votching at the first task."

"Thanks," said Harry as he suddenly felt much taller. "I saw you at the Quidditch World Cup. The Wronski Feint, you really -"

But something moved behind Krum in the trees, and Harry, who had some experience of the sort of thing that lurked in the forest, instinctively grabbed Krum's arm and pulled him around.

"Vot is it?"

Harry shook his head, staring at the place where he'd seen movement. He slipped his hand inside his robes, reaching for his wand.

Suddenly a man staggered out from behind a tall oak. For a moment, Harry didn't recognize him . . . then he realized it was Mr. Crouch.

He looked as though he had been traveling for days. The knees of his robes were ripped and bloody, his face scratched; he was unshaven and gray with exhaustion. His neat hair and mustache were both in need of a wash and a trim. His strange appearance, however, was nothing to the way he was behaving. Muttering and gesticulating, Mr. Crouch appeared to be talking to someone that he alone could see. He reminded Harry vividly of an old tramp he had seen once when out shopping with the Dursleys. That man too had been conversing wildly with thin air; Aunt Petunia had seized Dudley's hand and pulled him across the road to avoid him; Uncle Vernon had then treated the family to a long rant about what he would like to do with beggars and vagrants.

"Vosn't he a judge?" said Krum, staring at Mr. Crouch. "Isn't he vith your Ministry?"

Harry nodded, hesitated for a moment, then walked slowly toward Mr. Crouch, who did not look at him, but continued to talk to a nearby tree.

"... and when you've done that, Weatherby, send an owl to Dumbledore confirming the number of Durmstrang students who will be attending the tournament, Karkaroff has just sent word there will be twelve. . . ."

"Mr. Crouch?" said Harry cautiously.

"... and then send another owl to Madame Maxime, because she might want to up the number of students she's bringing, now Karkaroff's made it a round dozen ...do that, Weatherby, will you? Will you? Will..."

Mr. Crouch's eyes were bulging. He stood staring at the tree, muttering soundlessly at it. Then he staggered sideways and fell to his knees.

"Mr. Crouch?" Harry said loudly. "Are you all right?"

Crouch's eyes were rolling in his head. Harry looked around at Krum, who had followed him into the trees, and was looking down at Crouch in alarm.

"Vot is wrong with him?"

"No idea," Harry muttered. "Listen, you'd better go and get someone _"

"Dumbledore!" gasped Mr. Crouch. He reached out and seized a handful of Harry's robes, dragging him closer, though his eyes were staring over Harry's head. "I need... see ... Dumbledore. ..."

"Okay," said Harry, "if you get up, Mr. Crouch, we can go up to the-"

"I've done . . . stupid . . . thing" Mr. Crouch breathed. He looked utterly mad. His eyes were rolling and bulging, and a trickle of spittle was sliding down his chin. Every word he spoke seemed to cost him a terrible effort. "Must. . . tell. . .Dumbledore"

"Get up, Mr. Crouch," said Harry loudly and clearly. "Get up, I'll take you to Dumbledore!"

Mr. Crouch's eyes rolled forward onto Harry. "Who ... you?" he whispered.

"I'm a student at the school," said Harry, looking around at Krum for some help, but Krum was hanging back, looking extremely nervous.

"You're not... his?" whispered Crouch, his mouth sagging.

"No," said Harry, without the faintest idea what Crouch was talking about.

"Dumbledore's?"

"That's right," said Harry.

Crouch was pulling him closer; Harry tried to loosen Crouch's grip on his robes, but it was too powerful.

"Warn ... Dumbledore ..."

"I'll get Dumbledore if you let go of me," said Harry. "Just let go, Mr. Crouch, and I'll get him.. . ."

"Thank you, Weatherby, and when you have done that, I would like a cup of tea. My wife and son will be arriving shortly, we are attending a concert tonight with Mr. and Mrs. Fudge."

Crouch was now talking fluently to a tree again, and seemed completely unaware that Harry was there, which surprised Harry so much he didn't notice that Crouch had released him.

"Yes, my son has recently gained twelve O.W.L.S, most satisfactory, yes, thank you, yes, very proud indeed. Now, if you could bring me that memo from the Andorran Minister of Magic, I think I will have time to draft a response. ..."

"You stay here with him!" Harry said to Krum. "I'll get Dumbledore, I'll be quicker, I know where his office is -"

"He is mad," said Krum doubtfully, staring down at Crouch, who was still gabbling to the tree, apparently convinced it was Percy.

"Just stay with him," said Harry, starting to get up, but his movement seemed to trigger another abrupt change in Mr. Crouch, who seized him hard around the knees and pulled Harry back to the ground.

"Don't. . . leave . . . me!" he whispered, his eyes bulging again. "I... escaped . . . must warn . . . must tell... see Dumbledore . . . my fault... all my fault. . . Bertha ... dead ... all my fault. .. my son ... my fault... tell Dumbledore ... Harry Potter ...the Dark Lord . . . stronger . . . Harry Potter ..."

"I'll get Dumbledore if you let me go, Mr. Crouch!" said Harry. He looked furiously around at Krum. "Help me, will you?"

Looking extremely apprehensive, Krum moved forward and squatted down next to Mr. Crouch.

"Just keep him here," said Harry, pulling himself free of Mr. Crouch. "I'll be back with Dumbledore."

"Hurry, won't you?" Krum called after him as Harry sprinted away from the forest and up through the dark grounds. But he had only ran a few hundred meters when he realized there was a much faster way. "FLEUR, HERMIONE!"

"Yes Harry."

"I need one of you to get Dumbledore. Tell him Mr. Crouch just stumbled out of the Forbidden Forest and he's all mad as in crazy mad."

"We'll both go."

Harry turned to go back to where Krum was with Crouch. He hadn't gone too far when he saw a flash of red and shortly afterwards a flash of green. He recognized that particular color of green and he knew someone was probably dead. "Krum?" Then to Hermione and Fleur, "Tell Dumbledore I think someone is dead. I just saw a green flash in the area where I left Krum and Crouch and I am positive it was the killing curse. I'm going to take a look."

"Don't go back Harry." Hermione pleaded. "Wait for Dumbledore."

"What if it's Krum?" Harry thought. "I left him there. If he is dead, it's my fault."

"If 'e is dead, 'e is dead 'Arry. Zere will be nothing you can do now." Fleur said with an emotionally flat thought. "Remember someone is trying to kill you."

Harry wasn't listening. He took off on a run back to where Krum and Crouch were, pulling his wand out at the same time. When he got close he stopped and listened but couldn't hear anything.

"Damn Snape!" Harry heard Hermione scream in her mind. He quickly found that she and Fleur were arguing with Professor Snape who had blocked them from the Gargoyle to the Headmaster's office. Finally Dumbledore showed up and after listened to their plea for help started for where Harry was.

"Harry." He heard in his mind the voice of Hermione. "Dumbledore does not want you going back near where they are. He said to wait for him."

"I'm already pretty close." Harry replied. "But I can't hear anything. I'm going to see if I can see anything."

"WAIT!" He heard Hermione and Fleur both mentally yell but again he didn't listen. "Lumos." He said and the tip of his wand lit up. As he got closer to the spot he left them he didn't see either Krum or Crouch until the light hit upon a body lying in the grass. He scrambled over to it and found it was Krum. Relief swept through Harry when he saw the older Champion was still breathing. He continued to look but did not see Crouch.

"Tell Dumbledore Krum is unconscious and there is no sign of Crouch."

It wasn't long before Dumbledore, Hermione and Fleur had joined him. Dumbledore immediately looked over Krum and then looked around the clearing. Upon finding nothing else he bent over Krum again, pointed his wand at him, and muttered, "Ennervate."

Krum opened his eyes. He looked dazed. When he saw Dumbledore, he tried to sit up, but Dumbledore put a hand on his shoulder and made him lie still.

"He attacked me!" Krum muttered, putting a hand up to his head. "The old madman attacked me! I was looking around to see where Potter had gone and he attacked from behind!"

"Lie still for a moment," Dumbledore said.

The sound of thunderous footsteps reached them, and Hagrid came panting into sight with Fang at his heels. He was carrying his crossbow.

"Professor Dumbledore!" he said, his eyes widening. "Harry - what the - ?"

"Hagrid, I need you to fetch Professor Karkaroff." said Dumbledore. "His student has been attacked. When you've done that, kindly alert Professor Moody -"

"No need, Dumbledore," said a wheezy growl. "I'm here."

Moody was limping toward them, leaning on his staff, his wand lit.

"Damn leg," he said furiously. "couldn't keep up . . . what's happened...I saw you and those two," He nodded toward Hermione and Fleur, "hurrying down here and I decided to follow."

When Hagrid didn't turn and leave immediately, "Karkaroff, please, Hagrid!" said Dumbledore sharply.

"Oh yeah . . . right y'are, Professor. . ." said Hagrid, and he turned and disappeared into the dark trees, Fang trotting after him.

Dumbledore looked at Moody, "Alastor, it seems Barty Crouch was here. It is imperative we find him though it's possible he might be dead. Harry thought he saw a green Killing Curse before we got here."

Moody's magical eye swiveled immediately onto Harry and his normal eye followed as he gave him a piercing look. "Did you see

who might have cast it?" He asked as he continued the stare as if searching for something.

"No sir." Harry replied.

Moody turned back to Dumbledore and growling "I'll look for him." And he limped off into the forest.

Fleur and Hermione had both moved very close to Harry. Each reached out of put their arms around him. He could feel their love and their relief that he was alright but also could feel their frustration and annoyance that he didn't wait for Dumbledore. He could also feel Krum's eyes on him and Hermione. He didn't have to read Krum's mind to know he wanted Hermione comforting him.

"Can you tell me what Crouch said Harry?" Dumbledore asked.

"He's wasn't acting normal sir." Harry said as he turned to face the Headmaster. "He didn't seem to know where he was. He kept talking like he thought Percy Weasley's was there, and then he would change, and say he needed to see you...said he wanted to warn you . . . said he'd done something terrible ... he mentioned his son . . . and Bertha Jorkins .. and - and Voldemort. . . something about Voldemort getting stronger. .."

"We were just.." Hermione started to say but a look from Professor Dumbledore made her stop instantly. She realized the Krum was still nearby and possibly someone else.

It wasn't long until they heard the unmistakable sounds of Hagrid and Fang returning. Karkaroff was hurrying along behind them. He was wearing his sleek silver furs, and he looked pale and agitated.

"What is this?" he cried when he saw Krum still on the ground and Dumbledore beside him with Harry, the Beauxbaton Champion and the girl his Champion had taken to the Yule Ball all standing together. "What's going on?"

"I vos attacked!" said Krum as he rubbing his head. "Mr. Crouch or votever his name -"

"Crouch attacked you? Crouch attacked you? The Triwizard judge?"

"Igor," Dumbledore began, but Karkaroff had drawn himself up, clutching his furs around him, looking livid.

"Treachery!" he bellowed, pointing at Dumbledore. "It is a plot! You and your Ministry of Magic have lured me here under false pretenses, Dumbledore! This is not an equal competition! First you sneak Potter into the tournament, though he is underage! Now one of your Ministry friends attempts to put my champion out of action! I smell double-dealing and corruption in this whole affair, and you, Dumbledore, you, with your talk of closer international wizarding links, of rebuilding old ties, of forgetting old differences - here's what I think of you!"

Karkaroff spat onto the ground at Dumbledore's feet. In one swift movement, Hagrid seized the front of Karkaroff's furs, lifted him into the air, and slammed him against a nearby tree.

"Apologize!" Hagrid snarled as Karkaroff gasped for breath, Hagrid's massive fist at his throat, his feet dangling in midair.

"Hagrid, no!" Dumbledore shouted, his eyes flashing.

Hagrid removed the hand pinning Karkaroff to the tree, and Karkaroff slid all the way down the trunk and slumped in a huddle at its roots; a few twigs and leaves showered down upon his head.

"Kindly escort Harry and these two ladies back up to the castle, Hagrid," said Dumbledore sharply.

Breathing heavily, Hagrid gave Karkaroff a glowering look.

"Maybe I'd better stay here. Headmaster. . . ."

"You will take them back to school, Hagrid," Dumbledore repeated firmly. "Take all of them right up to Gryffindor Tower. And Harry, Miss Granger - I want you to stay there. Do not go back out tonight. Miss Delacour, I would suggest you collect your sister and have Hagrid escort you back to your carriage tonight."

"But her party.." Harry started but stopped immediately at the intensity of Dumbledore's gaze.

"Harry you think you witnessed a Killing Curse. We have someone who was stunned and someone missing and very well could be dead. Now is not the time to be concerned about a party."

"Yes sir."

The party ended abruptly when the three of them with Hagrid arrived back at the Tower. Harry still gave Gabrielle her gift while Hagrid waited. When she opened it she found a note and a small box. She opened the note and read to herself.

To my Angel,

It seems like so long ago when we went into the room with the trap door and I said we would jump into the unknown together when we bonded. When I saw this I knew it was for you. I give you this to mark our journey into that unknown. A journey I can truly say I look forward to.

Happy Birthday Gabrielle

Harry

She opened the small box and found a silver charm bracelet. The bracelet had two charms already on it. One was an angel with a green emerald where her heart would be and the other was a small Hippogriff. She looked at Harry with tears in her eyes and sprung into his arms. "I love you Mon Amour." She said.

And it happened. Without even realizing what he was doing; the words came as natural as each time he said them to Hermione. As he looked Gabrielle in the eyes he replied, "And I love you Gabrielle." and he kissed her. Though Gsbrielle still held out her wrist for Harry to put her bracelet on her and she constantly looked at it the rest of the night before falling to sleep, she knew that in those few words, she had received the best gift she could have imagined.

The words had come so naturally to Harry that it wasn't until a minute after saying them that he realized what he had said and as he looked at the bond, he knew it really was there. He did love Gabrielle, not as much as Hermione yet, but he did love her. He looked at Fleur and noticed the look in her eyes. A look of hope? Of

expectation? Of happiness? In the bond he felt all of that. He looked into his bond with her and found the love that he hadn't seen before. He smiled at her and was about to tell her also when she said something first. "So you know? Don't tell me yet. I want to 'ear it from your lips ze first time."

"How long have you known?"

"A while." Fleur replied.

"Why didn't you mention it?"

"Because I wanted you to realize it."

"I'm sorry for not seeing it until now."

"Don't be. Just tell me tomorrow."

"Tomorrow and every day after that."

The happiness that radiated from both Fleur and Gabrielle as they left with Hagrid was almost visible. Hermione, remembering her late night conversation with Fleur also went to bed with happiness dancing in her heart.

It was at first light that found Harry showered and dressed and on his way to the Beauxbaton carriage. Madam Maxine was already awake when Harry requested entrance.

"Neither young lady is awake yet Mr. Potter." The half giantess said when she let him in.

"I'd like to be there when they wake Madam Maxine if I may."

She looked over the young man and then nodded. Fleur was of age and the young man was her bond mate. "Nothing inappropriate Mr. Potter. Oh and before you go, I understand ze Durmstrang Champion was attacked last night and you were zere, can you tell me anyzing about it? 'Agrid only knew zat Monsieur Crouch was missing and Victor Krum 'ad been attacked."

"Yeah I guess." Harry replied knowing Hagrid would have told what he knew already beside Dumbledore hadn't told them not to tell

anyone. "Krum and I were talking over near the paddock for your horses when Mr. Crouch came out of the woods. He was ill. I started to go get Dumbledore but after going a little distance I asked Fleur and Hermione to bring him down. As I turned back to where I had left them I saw a red and a green flash. Krum had been stunned and Crouch was missing."

"And was Mr. Crouch found?"

"I don't know. Professor Moody was looking for him."

"Zank you. I shall ask Dumblydore later about it. Now you go and wait on zose ladies of yours."

He nodded and smiled at the Beauxbaton Headmistress. He slipped into the familiar room his bond mates shared and his eyes came to rest upon them. Even in their sleep they radiated beauty. He remembered the first time he had seen them sleeping when he woke after the second event. "Three months and a lifetime ago." He thought. He walked over to Fleur's bed and sat down and stared at the young woman. Her covers had been thrown aside during the night and he could see most aspects of her body in her night shirt. From her silver blonde hair splayed over her pillow, to her perfect nose and lips, to the outline of her full breasts that were as perfect as the rest of her. His eyes trailed down her body and a moment's embarrassment overcame him when he saw her black lace knickers. But it quickly passed as he thought of all the times she had encouraged him to look at her. He spent several minutes just gazing at his oldest bond mate. Finally he leaned down and kissed her gently on the lips causing her to stir. Another kiss followed and then another. As her eyes slowly opened he said the words she wanted to hear. "I love you Fleur Delacour, you are the flower of my heart."

She looked through his glasses into those emerald green eyes she loved so much. Not for the first time she wondered how orbs so small could be so deep. She felt the love in the bond, and saw the love in his eyes, tears filled her own eyes as she replied. "And I love you 'Arry Potter." Her arms snaked around his neck and she pulled him into a kiss. A kiss not filled with passion, but one filled with the love and joy she felt in her heart. As the kiss finally ended, they continued to stare into each other's eyes. Green into blue, blue into green, happiness and love reflecting in them for each other to see. He brought the back of his hand up and gently caressed her cheek

causing her eyes to close as she savored the feeling. As she opened them again she had a slightly mischievous grin and she raised her own hand and after undoing a couple of buttons she slipped it inside his shirt as she had months ago before they bonded. Though like last time, the touch seemed to bring every fiber of his being to that spot, this time as he continued to gaze at his blue eyed flower, he never wanted it to end. Finally she pulled her hand away and then pulled him down beside her. He wrapped his arms around her and buried his nose into her hair. As she laid there in her bond mate's arms she thought of the past year and how she came to be in love with him, from boarding the carriage at Beauxbaton unsure of what awaited her at Hogwarts to this moment when life felt so perfect. She interlaced her fingers with his and pulled them up to her chin as she sighed her contentment. It wasn't much longer before Gabrielle awoke and finding Harry there, she quickly climbed on the other side of him and held him as he was holding Fleur. Soon Harry was lying on his back and two very beautiful witches were in an arm with their heads resting on his chest.

"I love you Gabrielle Delacour." Harry said softly and he felt her arm that was holding him tighten as she replied "I love you 'Arry."

"I love you Fleur." Harry repeated his earlier proclamation. She looked up and into his eyes and he could see hers were now free of tears but filled with happiness. "I could listen to you say zat all day and never tire of eet." She again let out a contented sigh before continuing, "I love you too."

Madam Maxine noted how happy the three of them were when they left the carriage a little later and wondered exactly what had happened in the Delacour's room.

Breakfast was a happy affair. Hermione could see the happiness in both of her bond sister's eyes. She even had to remind Fleur not to stare at Harry a couple of times. Fred and George had noticed the staring and also made it a point to distract her on occasion. The conversation eventually turned to the previous night.

"Do you think Moody found Crouch or whoever attacked them?" Harry wondered.

"To bad we don't have Defense today." Hermione replied. "Or we could ask him."

"Let's go see him during our break after History."

History was never a fast moving class, and this class was slower than normal. Fortunately for Harry the happiness radiating over his bond with Fleur and Gabrielle made the time bearable since Hermione still refused to let him sleep. Gabrielle had Herbology at the same time with the Ravenclaws. They were potting Puffapods and as they worked together around one of the benches Gabrielle told Ginny and Luna about Harry's gift to her, but realized she had no answer when they asked her the significance of the Hippogriff. Ginny was surprisingly excited for Gabrielle when she told her that Harry had said he loved her, though Ginny didn't realize the true significance of the event.

"My father did an article on Veela last year." Luna said. "He said if they mate with their lovers under a full moon it causes their lovers to lose all of their hair. Will you be mating with Harry soon?"

The Puffapod Gabrielle had been working on flew five feet before landing. "Non, we will not be mating soon." She replied quietly after retrieving her wayward plant.

Luna smiled in a dreamy fashion. "When you do mate with him, don't do it under a full moon because I like Harry's hair. I can give you my lunar charts for the next year if it would help."

"Zanks but I really don't zink I'll need eet."

"Oh. I guess you would have you own." Luna replied. "Will you bond with Harry before mating with him?"

"Wh...what do you mean?" Gabrielle asked barely holding onto her plant this time as she quickly looked around to see who else might have heard the question.

"You love bond of course." Luna replied. "But I'm not sure Harry is the type of person to be tied to a stake while you dance naked around him forming the bond."

"Zat's not 'ow a Veela love bond is for..." Gabrielle started before stopping. "We should talk about somezing else."

'Ok." Luna continued dreamily, "Did you know that the Minister of Magic has an army of....."

As Luna continued talking about articles that had appeared in the Quibbler, Ginny couldn't help but remember how nervous Gabrielle had gotten when Luna mentioned the love bond. She decided she should find out more about it and how it might concern her new friend.

After History class was over, Harry and Hermione hurried to the Dark Arts classroom and found Professor Moody leaving it. He looked extremely tired. The eyelid of his normal eye was drooping, giving his face an even more lopsided appearance than usual.

"Professor Moody?" Harry called as they made their way toward him through the crowd.

"Hello, Potter," growled Moody. His magical eye followed a couple of passing first years, who sped up, looking nervous; it rolled into the back of Moody's head and watched them around the corner before he spoke again.

"Come in here."

He stood back to let them into his empty classroom, limped in after them, and closed the door.

"Did you find him?" Harry asked without preamble. "Mr. Crouch?"

"No," said Moody. He moved over to his desk, sat down, stretched out his wooden leg with a slight groan, and pulled out his hip flask.

"Did you use the map?" Harry asked.

"Of course," said Moody, taking a swig from his flask. "Took a leaf out of your book, Potter. Summoned it from my office into the forest. He wasn't anywhere on there."

"What do you think happened to him professor?"

"I don't know Potter. You said you saw what looked like the killing curse. It's possible he was killed, or someone might have wanted you to think he was killed. But Dumbledore's told me how you like to

solve things on your own Potter, but there is nothing you can do in this case. Dumbledore's notified the Ministry and they will be taking over the search for him and whoever else might have been around. You need to keep your mind on the third task."

"What?" said Harry. "Oh yeah . . ."

"Should be right up your street, this one," said Moody, looking up at Harry and scratching his scarred and stubbly chin. "From what Dumbledore's said, you've managed to get through stuff like this plenty of times. Broke your way through a series of obstacles guarding the Philosopher's Stone in your first year, didn't you?"

Harry looked at Hermione and remembered Ron and her by his side. "I had help sir."

Moody grinned. "I'm sure you did." He looked at Hermione, "And I think if you help him practice for this one, I'll be surprised if he doesn't win, but in the meantime...constant vigilance Potter. Constant vigilance." He pulled out his hip flask and took a long draw and again he looked at Hermione, "You stick close to Potter, all right? I'm keeping an eye on things, but all the same . . . you can never have too many eyes out."

"Yes sir." Hermione replied and then an idea about the map occurred to her. "In fact sir, would it be possible to get Harry's map back? It would definitely help me look out for him?"

"Hermione what are you doing?"

"That map is the key to finding Skeeter and protecting Sirius."

An unidentified look passed through the retired Auror's eyes before he continued. "I wish I could but it's been a seriously useful tool in protecting the school."

"Sir, I think Hermione has a point thought." Harry started, "It seems all the trouble seems to happen around me. If we have the map it would be help alert us to trouble that we can then bring to you."

"Between your classes and other times you can't spend as much time looking at it as we can." Hermione argued. "And I'm sure Harry would be glad to loan it to you again if you need it."

"You can always summon it." Harry replied, though where he planned to put it, it would never respond to a summons.

The magically eye whirled back and forth between Harry and Hermione. "I will need it for the next few days while we sort out last night. We'll talk again later in the week."

"That's fine sir. Thank you sir."

Later that evening in the Chamber of Secrets, Harry and his bond mates told Sirius and Lupin all that happened in the last twenty-four hours. When they got to the point left with Krum, Sirius became upset.

"Harry, what are you playing at?" Sirius yelled at his godson. "You just admitted a few days ago that someone is planning to kill you and you casually walk away from all protection with someone from Durmstrang? If you hadn't left when you did, that killing curse might have been for you. Did you think of that?"

"I should 'ave stayed with you 'Arry." Fleur said softly as she thought of the danger her bond mate had been in.

"No, I wanted you to go to Gabrielle's party." Harry said to her. He then turned to Sirius. "When I first left with him, it was more to get away from Bagman and I didn't know he was planning on walking all the way to the Forbidden Forest. What was I to when we got that far? Tell him someone is trying to kill me? Tell him I'm afraid to go near the Forest? "

"You've just got to more careful Harry." Sirius said as looked around the Chamber. "Damn I hate being down here and not be able to help you."

"We made some progress on that point. We talked to Moody and it looks like we can get the map back after they finish with the stuff from last night."

"How'd you manage that?" Lupin asked.

"Moody told Hermione to stick close to me and she pointed out she could do a better job of it with the map." Harry replied as he

wrapped his arms around Hermione and kissed her on the neck.
"She saw an opening and took it."

"When it's in our hands I'll feel better." Lupin said.

"When we do have it, we can try to track down Skeeter." Hermione said. "I walked outside today and I never noticed how many beetles are out and about this time of the year."

They then finished telling Lupin and Sirius about the previous evening. Sirius did pick on a blushing Hermione about Krum's affections.

"The look he gave me when Hermione showed up and put her arms around me instead of him when he was the one who got stunned wasn't great." Harry said.

"Watch yourself around him Harry."

"I plan on it." Harry replied. The last thing he needed was a jealous Victor Krum.

They spent the majority of the weekend in the Chamber starting to prepare for the third task. Hermione pulled out a quill and parchment and wrote down all the creatures that Hagrid might put in the maze, including Fluffy, skrewts and Acromantulas. Fleur suggested other creatures that might have been included and Lupin through his own suggestions in with possibilities like Boggarts. They then started working on spells and strategies to counter each creature. Fleur showed Harry a more powerful cutting curse which should take a leg off one of the giant spiders, along with several other spells that might work.

%%%%%%%%%

Vernon Dursley was happy. His normal life had finally returned to normal. After a complete disaster of a spring which included a complete rewiring of the house electrical system and replacing every appliance in the house things were finally settling down. It had been at least two weeks since something major had happened. Today nothing would put Vernon Dursley in a bad mood. He was headed out to his first golf outing of the year. He had invited his biggest customer who was bringing his son who had just graduated from a

University. Vernon had asked his most important parts vendor along to round out the foursome. It was a beautiful day. Blue sky, no wind, perfect temperature.

Vernon watched the other three in his foursome tee off, each hitting respectable drives into the fairway. He pulled out his favorite driver and strolled onto the tee box. After teeing up his golf ball and taking a few practice swings he found himself addressing the ball. He had learned several years earlier that if he visualized the ball being the head of the freak, he got at least ten extra yards on his distance. He could see the head of his nephew sitting on the tee as his club reached its zenith in his backswing. He could feel that perfect swing as the club came down in its perfect arc and struck the ball. Unfortunately with the less length the club now had, it only hit the top part of the ball "topping it". The ball screamed across the ground until it rolled to a stop thirty yards ahead, in the middle of the women's tee box.

By the end of the round Vernon Dursley had snapped three of his graphite shafted clubs, his steel shafted sand wedge had a thirty degree curve in it and his putter was in the bottom of the pond near the eighteenth green. He had shot his worst round ever. His customer refused Vernon's offer for a round afterwards and left very quickly with his son. Vernon never received another order from him. Lost in his anger he didn't watch his speed on the drive back and was pulled over and ticketed. He was thinking of the bottle of scotch when he pulled into the garage. When he opened the door into the house an all familiar site greeted him, Petunia was there waiting. This time there was a stack of magazines in front of her. When her first words were "YOUR SON..." Vernon knew it was going to take more than one bottle.

That morning Petunia had been happy. Her new pots and pans were working fine, her house was once again spotless after all of the carpentry and electrical work had been completed and in a week her son Dudley was due to come home. Even better the freak wouldn't be back for almost another month. She decided to spruce Dudley's room up in preparation for his return. As she started to sweep the floor her foot hit a corner of the raised floorboard. A minute later Petunia was staring at a collection of adult magazines. The top one had a scantily clad harlot staring up at her. Petunia felt dirty and ill as she collected the magazines and headed down the steps to await her husband.

%%%%%%%%%

The rest of the Slytherins might be avoiding Harry Potter but that was not the case for Draco Malfoy. He knew Harry was behind what had happened to him and was not about to let it go. He knew exactly what he was going to do to get even.

A/N didn't get to the third task, but it should be soon.

%%%%%%%% May 31st %%%%%%%%%

Harry had just left lunch and was walking toward the North tower for his double Divinations Monday afternoon. The day was perfect outside as bright sunlight poured through the castle windows and as Harry looked out through them the blue sky lifted his spirits. The smile he had in his heart and his face even Trelawney and her overly perfumed classroom would have a hard time removing. He had almost reached the ladder when he felt it. Fear and anger, sudden deep fear and anger...it took him a couple of seconds to realize it was coming from Gabrielle. He could feel she was afraid and angry at the same time. Harry quickly grabbed her thoughts and what she was seeing and found himself surrounded by Draco Malfoy and his over sized thugs. They were behind a greenhouse on a path from the Beauxbaton carriage to the greenhouses where Gabrielle had been going for Herbology. Harry knew the path was out of sight of the castle and most everyone else.

"Well if it isn't Potter's little whore with no one to protect her." Harry heard Draco say in a voice filled with mirth. "What should we do with her guys?" He asked his companions.

"I'm coming love." Harry said and without a second thought he had dropped his book bag and raced down the hallway. Though he called to Hermione and Fleur, he already knew they were headed to the Chamber and wouldn't get to Gabrielle any faster than he would. Harry pirouetted around two first year students to dodge them. He couldn't run and keep concentrating enough to find out what was happening to Gabrielle. He just hoped she could delay them enough for him to get there. Just as he exited the door to the outside he felt something else. A shift of some sort happened in the bond with Gabrielle. Something had happened and a hollow pit developed in Harry's stomach. Then over his bond with her, Harry felt an extreme rush of both hot anger and cold fear sweep over him.

"Gabrielle!" He shouted in his mind but no reply came. Fearing the worst he gripped his wand firmly in his hand and ran around the last corner with a words to the stunning spell already on his lips and... he stopped. He stopped dead in his track as he tried to comprehend what he was seeing. Crabbe and Goyle were racing toward him but looking back at something. Draco Malfoy was on the ground curled in a fetal position and standing over him was Gabrielle. Harry now knew what he had felt in the bond. Gabrielle had transformed. From

her shoulders was a pair of white scaly wings and her head was elongated into bird head with a beak and in a hand or talon raised over her head was a ball of flame ready to be thrown.

"NO!" Harry shouted. "Gabrielle DON'T!"

Gabrielle turned and looked at Harry.

At the distraction Draco scrambled to his feet and ran. As Malfoy ran past him, Harry noticed a large wet spot on his robes and a distinct smell of urine. As much as Harry wanted to pursue Malfoy, he knew he needed to be with Gabrielle. As he turned back to his youngest bond mate he could feel her emotions settling down, but then he felt a wave of sadness and anguish from her. As he started toward her, she bolted away between two of the greenhouses.

Harry's shouts had brought Professor Sprout and several students racing out of the classroom. Ignoring Professor's Sprouts summons, Harry sped off in pursuit of his bond mate. It wasn't long before he found her. She was sitting on the ground under a tree with her knees clasped in her arms and tears pouring down her cheeks. Her body had already started transforming back. Her head was back to normal except for a few feathers but she still had wings which were slowly folding in upon themselves.

"Angel? Are you alright?"

"Go away." Gabrielle said through her tears. "I know you don't want to be 'ere."

"Why would you say that Angel?"

"Don't call me zat. You know you don't mean eet." Gabrielle cried as she held her knees in her arms even tighter. "I'm ugly and 'orrible."

Harry sat down beside her. He gently reached over caressed one of her wings and surprisingly found it to be very soft. "No you're not ugly nor are you horrible, you are beautiful. Angels have wings and you're still my angel and a lady I love." Harry moved his hand to her face and gently turned it to face him. "Do you think I love you because of your hair or your lips? I love you Gabrielle because of your heart and your mind." He leaned in and kissed gently on the lips. "And nothing will ever stop me from loving you." Harry knew

Hermione and Fleur were behind them now and listening but not interrupting. "Gabrielle what just happened is part of you. I knew it could happen. I saw the Veela at the World Cup but it doesn't matter to me, I'm just glad Malfoy wasn't able to hurt you." He realized then that he didn't know what Draco had done to her. "He didn't hurt you did he?" He asked.

"Non. 'E tried to touch my breast but zat is when I..." She didn't finish but looked down at the ground before continuing. " 'E called me a...a whore and said zats all I would be good for when I grew up."

Harry heard the gasp from Fleur behind him but kept his concentration entirely on Gabrielle. He gently lifted her face to look at his, then he used his thumb to wipe away her tears. Pulling her closer to him, he wrapped his arms around her. "I love you Gabrielle Delacour and whether you have wings and feathers or skin and a smile, I will always love you." Gabrielle's arms reached around Harry and held him.

"You do still love me?" She asked almost in a whisper her voice still quavering.

"Yes, you can feel it in our bond, but I will tell you over and over if that's what you need." Harry lifted her chin and his lips found hers again, gently, caring. He noted that her wings were entirely gone now. "Don't be afraid to be who you are, and don't ever think I would stop loving you. If it does happen again, I'll be there to hold you and calm you and still I will love you." He felt her relax under his arms.

Hermione and Fleur joined them then, each sitting on the ground across from Harry and Gabrielle. Fleur looked at Harry with tears in her own eyes but she was smiling. As much as she hated that her sister had went through what she did, Fleur knew that Harry accepted them for all that they were and loved them still. It was the last fear she had kept buried and now knew it she could let it go.

Shortly afterwards Professor Sprout came over and asked what had happened. Harry left Gabrielle to the comforts of her bond sisters and explained to the Herbology Professor about the attack. After being assured that Gabrielle didn't need to go to Madam Pomfrey but would miss the rest of class, she left them promising that she

would give the assignments to Ginny and Luna and discuss the affair with the Professors concerned.

Hermione eventually had to leave to go to Arithmancy and Fleur had her government class. As Harry thought how much he wanted to hurt Malfoy, he also realized that Draco would surely tell his father or Snape and Dumbledore needed to know before either of them made it to him.

"We need to go talk to the Headmaster, Gabrielle." Harry said softly. "He'll need to know what happened. I'm sure it won't be long before Malfoy's father is here complaining about how you attacked his son."

"But 'e..." Gabrielle started.

"I know he was the one who attacked you, but the truth is something that rarely passes over the tongue of Malfoy or his father." Harry said softly.

A few minutes later and they were ascending the staircase behind the Gargoyle. Gabrielle remembered the password from the last time they had come when Harry was still under the potion's effect. As they reached the top of the staircase the door to Dumbledore's office opened and Dumbledore, Minister Fudge and Professor Moody came out. All five of them stopped as they encountered each other. Cornelius Fudge was the first to break the standoff.

"Harry" He asked jovially. "How are you?"

"Fine sir." Harry replied and then ignoring Fudge he turned to Dumbledore. "Sir, something just happened that we need to tell you about."

Professor Dumbledore studied the two of them for a second before nodding. "Can you two wait in my office? We were just going to inspect the area where the events with Mr. Crouch happened. It shouldn't take long."

"Do you need me to come along sir?"

"That won't be necessary, but thank you. Just wait here and I'll return shortly."

"Yes sir."

Harry and Gabrielle entered Dumbledore's office as they heard the clunking of Professor's Moody's wooden leg growing fainter in the corridor below.

Harry saw the Scarlet and gold phoenix on its stand beside Professor Dumbledore's desk. "Hello Fawkes, this is Gabrielle. Gabrielle this is Fawkes."

" 'Ello Fawkes." Gabrielle said to the magnificent bird. "Zank you for saving my bond mate's life."

The bird swished its tail and warbled several notes of a song that instantly left Harry and Gabrielle feeling peaceful.

As Gabrielle sat in a chair in front of Dumbledore's desk, Harry wandered around the office looking at the various little gadgets that whirled and puffed. As he continued to look, he noticed a silver white glowing coming from a cabinet door and he couldn't help but open it. He saw the same basin that was used earlier to look at his memories before the bonding. "Had Dumbledore been showing Fudge my memories?" Harry wondered. He looked more closely at the silvery stuff in the bowl. As he focused on a one of the silver strands he saw something he couldn't make out, in an attempt to see better he pulled out his wand and nudged it. The stuff in the bowl became crystal clear and he found himself looking into an enormous room, a room into which he seemed to be looking through a circular window in the ceiling.

The room was dimly lit; he thought it might even be underground, for there were no windows, merely torches in brackets such as the ones that illuminated the walls of Hogwarts. Lowering his face so that his nose was a mere inch away from the glassy substance, Harry saw that rows and rows of witches and wizards were seated around every wall on what seemed to be benches rising in levels. An empty chair stood in the very center of the room. There was something about the chair that gave Harry an ominous feeling. Chains encircled the arms of it, as though its occupants were usually tied to it.

"Harry." Gabrielle called. "What are you looking at?"

"I..I'm not sure. It's some kind of large room with a chair with chains." He replied as he continued to try to get a better look.

His face got closer and closer as he tried to make out the tiny witches and wizards occupying the seats until his nose touched the liquid. He felt a great lurch and heard Gabrielle yell "HARRY!" as he felt himself falling into the basin as he had seen Hermione and Fleur do all of those months ago.

Harry found himself sitting on a bench in the room that he had just saw in the basin. "I'm in a memory then." He thought. "But whose and when?"

As he looked around he saw at least two hundred witches and wizards in the various seats and as he turned to the seat next to him he let out a small cry. Sitting next to him was Albus Dumbledore. "Sir..I'm sorry I didn't..." but he stopped. Professor Dumbledore hadn't turned toward him but kept his attention toward what was happening in the room. It was then he realized he was in one of Dumbledore's memories.

Harry turned his attention to what was happening. It must be important if Dumbledore had been busy reviewing it. He started studying the witches and wizards around him. It wasn't long before a door in the corner of the room opened and a man entered, flanked by two dementors.

Harry felt cold as the tall hooded creatures glided slowly toward the chair in the center of the room, each holding a wrist of the man between them. The man looked like he would faint at any moment and Harry couldn't blame him having felt the dementors up close himself. The man was placed in the chair and the dementors glided back out of the door they came through. When Harry looked back at the man they had escorted he recognized him. It was Karkarov. As Harry watched, the chains glowed gold and snaked their way up Karkarov's arms binding him to the chair.

Harry felt a movement to his side and looked over and found Gabrielle sitting beside him. "What's going on 'Arry?"

"I don't know. Why are you here?"

"When you fell in ze pensieve and didn't come back out after a minute, I came in looking for you."

"Thank you." Harry said and smiled as he took her hand, it felt solid in the memory and they both watch what happened next.

"Igor Karkaroff," said a curt voice to their left. Harry looked around and saw Mr. Crouch standing up in the middle of the bench beside him. Crouch's hair was dark, his face was much less lined, he looked fit and alert. "You have been brought from Azkaban to present evidence to the Ministry of Magic. You have given us to understand that you have important information for us."

Harry pointed his finger at Crouch, "That's Mr. Crouch." He said to Gabrielle "I don't think you ever saw him."

"Not in person, but ze paper 'ad ze judges pictures, zough I doubt I would 'ave recognized im."

Karkaroff straightened himself as best he could, tightly bound to the chair. "I have, sir," he said, and although his voice was very scared, Harry could still hear the familiar unctuous note in it. "I wish to be of use to the Ministry. I wish to help. I - I know that the Ministry is trying to - to round up the last of the Dark Lords supporters. I am eager to assist in any way I can. ..."

All around them Harry and Gabrielle heard the witches and wizard's murmuring. From the other side of Dumbledore Harry clearly heard a growling voice he recognized. "Filth."

Harry leaned forward so that he could see past Dumbledore. Mad-Eye Moody was sitting there - except that there was a very noticeable difference in his appearance. He did not have his magical eye, but two normal ones. Both were looking down upon Karkaroff, and both were narrowed in intense dislike.

"Crouch is going to let him out," Moody breathed quietly to Dumbledore. "He's done a deal with him. Took me six months to track him down, and Crouch is going to let him go if he's got enough new names. Let's hear his information, I say, and throw him straight back to the dementors."

Dumbledore made a small noise of dissent through his long, crooked nose.

"Ah, I was forgetting . . . you don't like the dementors, do you, Albus?" said Moody with a sardonic smile.

"No," said Dumbledore calmly, "I'm afraid I don't. I have long felt the Ministry is wrong to ally itself with such creatures."

"But for filth like this . . ." Moody said softly.

Harry's attention left Moody as Crouch had continued his questioning of Karkarov. As he named various names only to find they had already been apprehended or captured Karkarov appeared desperate.

"There was Travers - he helped murder the McKinnons! Mulciber - he specialized in the Imperius Curse, forced countless people to do horrific things! Rookwood, who was a spy, and passed He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named useful information from inside the Ministry itself!"

Harry could tell that, this time, Karkaroff had struck gold. The watching crowd was all murmuring together.

"Rookwood?" said Mr. Crouch, nodding to a witch sitting in front of him, who began scribbling upon her piece of parchment. "Augustus Rookwood of the Department of Mysteries?"

"The very same," said Karkaroff eagerly. "I believe he used a network of well placed wizards, both inside the Ministry and out, to collect information -"

"But Travers and Mulciber we have," said Mr. Crouch. "Very well, Karkaroff, if that is all, you will be returned to Azkaban while we decide -"

"Not yet!" cried Karkaroff, looking quite desperate. "Wait, I have more!"

Harry could see him sweating in the torchlight, his white skin contrasting strongly with the black of his hair and beard.

"Snape!" he shouted. "Severus Snape!"

Harry felt his blood go cold at that name and Gabrielle felt her bond mate tense.

"Snape has been cleared by this council," said Crouch disdainfully. "He has been vouched for by Albus Dumbledore."

"No!" shouted Karkaroff, straining at the chains that bound him to the chair. "I assure you! Severus Snape is a Death Eater!"

Dumbledore had gotten to his feet. "I have given evidence already on this matter," he said calmly. "Severus Snape was indeed a Death Eater. However, he rejoined our side before Lord Voldemort's downfall and turned spy for us, at great personal risk. He is now no more a Death Eater than I am."

Harry sat numbly, though he had heard Professor Dumbledore's argument for Professor Snape, he still heard the words, "Severus Snape was a Death Eater." He didn't notice the dungeon dissolving around him as he thought "My mother's best friend became a Death Eater?"

When Harry's attention returned to what was around him he found himself in the same courtroom but in a different spot with Gabrielle still beside him clutching his hand. As he looked around the courtroom he realized it must be a different trial on a different day. As he looked around he saw a much younger Rita Skeeter in Magenta Robes sucking the end of an acid green quill.

Harry watched the trial of Ludo Bagman until it too dissolved into nothingness and was replaced by a third scene. This time there was a witch sitting next to a much greyer and wearier Mr. Crouch sobbing into a handkerchief.

"Bring them in," Crouch said as his voice echoed through a very silent dungeon.

The door in the corner opened yet again. Six dementors entered this time, flanking a group of four people. Harry saw the people in the crowd turn to look up at Mr. Crouch. A few of them whispered to one another.

The dementors placed each of the four people in the four chairs with chained arms that now stood on the dungeon floor. There was a thickset man who stared blankly up at Crouch; a thinner and more nervous-looking man, whose eyes were darting around the crowd; a woman with thick, shining dark hair and heavily hooded eyes, who was sitting in the chained chair as though it were a throne; and a boy in his late teens, who looked nothing short of petrified. He was shivering, his straw colored hair all over his face, his freckled skin milk-white. The witch beside Crouch began to rock backward and forward in her seat, whimpering into her handkerchief.

Crouch stood up. He looked down upon the four in front of him, and there was pure hatred in his face.

"You have been brought here before the Council of Magical Law," he said clearly, "so that we may pass judgment on you, for a crime so heinous -"

"Father," said the boy with the straw-colored hair. "Father. . .please . . ."

"- that we have rarely heard the like of it within this court," said Crouch, speaking more loudly, drowning out his son's voice.

"We have heard the evidence against you. The four of you stand accused of capturing an Auror - Frank Longbottom - and subjecting him to the Cruciatus Curse, believing him to have knowledge of the present whereabouts of your exiled master, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named -"

"Father, I didn't!" shrieked the boy in chains below. "I didn't, I swear it. Father, don't send me back to the dementors -"

"You are further accused," bellowed Mr. Crouch, "of using the Cruciatus Curse on Frank Longbottom's wife, when he would not give you information. You planned to restore He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named to power, and to resume the lives of violence you presumably led while he was strong. I now ask the jury -"

"Mother!" screamed the boy below, and the wispy little witch beside Crouch began to sob, rocking backward and forward. "Mother, stop him. Mother, I didn't do it, it wasn't me!"

"I now ask the jury," shouted Mr. Crouch, "to raise their hands if they believe, as I do, that these crimes deserve a life sentence in Azkaban!"

In unison, the witches and wizards along the right-hand side of the dungeon raised their hands proclaiming their guilt. The boy began to scream.

"No! Mother, no! I didn't do it, I didn't do it, I didn't know! Don't send me there, don't let him!"

The dementors were gliding back into the room. The boys' three companions rose quietly from their seats; the woman with the heavy-lidded eyes looked up at Crouch and called, "The Dark Lord will rise again Crouch! Throw us into Azkaban; we will wait! He will rise again and will come for us. He will reward us beyond any of his other supporters! We alone were faithful! We alone tried to find him!"

But the boy was trying to fight off the dementors, even though Harry could see their cold, draining power starting to affect him. The crowd was jeering, some of them on their feet, as the woman swept out of the dungeon, and the boy continued to struggle.

"I'm your son!" he screamed up at Crouch. "I'm your son!"

"You are no son of mine!" bellowed Mr. Crouch, his eyes bulging suddenly. "I have no son!"

The wispy witch beside him gave a great gasp and slumped in her seat. She had fainted. Crouch appeared not to have noticed.

"Take them away!" Crouch roared at the dementors, spit flying from his mouth. "Take them away, and may they rot there!"

"Father! Father, I wasn't involved! No! No! Father, please!"

"I think it is time to return to my office," said a voice from beside Gabrielle. When they turned to look another Dumbledore was sitting there looking directly at them.

"Come, the new Dumbledore said and putting a hand on both of their shoulders, they were pulled up and out of the memory.

As he landed back in Dumbledore's office, Harry grabbed Gabrielle before she stumbled and then turned to Dumbledore. "I'm sorry sir. I saw the thing and wondered if it was my memories...and then I saw.."

"I quite understand Harry." The Headmaster replied. "Curiosity is very strong in the young, but you should exercise caution with your curiosity. Remember that excellent muggle saying...it goes something like curiosity killed the cat. Now I do believe there was something you want to speak to me about before becoming lost in my thoughts."

"Uh..yes sir." Harry replied and looked at Gabrielle who suddenly looked pale. "Draco Malfoy attempted to attack Gabrielle as she was going to Herbology."

"Attacked? In what manner Miss Delacour?"

" 'E grabbed me and tried to grope...he tried to touch my breast sir and called me..." She had started crying again.

"He called her a whore sir. And later said it was all she would be good for."

"I see." Dumbledore said studying the two of them with his piercing gaze. "There must be something else as well or you would have taken this to Professor McGonagall I'm sure."

"Yes sir." Harry replied. "Gabrielle defended herself by transforming sir."

"Ah...yes that will have Lucius here shortly I am sure." Dumbledore said then softly to Gabrielle. "I must ask Miss Delacour, did you hurt him? Burn him? Scratch him?"

"No sir." She replied as she sniffled. Dumbledore conjured a handkerchief and handed it to her. "Zank you sir. When I...well ze two others...."

"Others?"

"Crabbe and Goyle sir."

"Yes of course, please continue."

"The others ran away and...and Malfoy fell down."

"Sir I think that was when I got there. Malfoy was on the ground and Gabrielle was standing over him with those flames the Veela have in her hand but she never threw it. I yelled and that distracted her. Malfoy ran away at that time." Harry hesitated before saying the last part. "I think he had wet himself sir."

"That is also very understandable." Dumbledore replied with a twinkle appearing in his eyes. "I appreciate you bringing this to my attention. I am sure Lucius will arrive within the next few days."

"What will he do sir?"

"Eventually? Nothing of any consequence legally, but you can probably guess there will be an article in the Prophet soon about the attack and it will not be factual by any means. He will also try to push legislation requiring Veela to register with the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures."

"Like an animal, like Buckbeak?" Harry asked as his eyes narrowed.

"More like werewolves, but as I said he will try but fail. The ICW has fully recognized Veela as having full rights and after the World Cup, Cornelius cannot deal with another problem with the ICW especially since I am the Supreme Mugwump and," Dumbledore looked over his half moon glasses at Gabrielle, "aslo as to whom your father is."

"Zank you."

"You're welcome Miss Delacour. I am sorry this happened and I will speak to Professor Snape about an appropriate punishment. Now if there isn't anything else?" The question hung for a second before Harry asked something he had been thinking of.

"Sir in the memory, the Longbottoms, were they....they Neville's parents?"

Dumbledore gave Harry a very sharp look. "Has Neville never told you why he has been brought up by his grandmother?" he said.

Harry shook his head, wondering, as he did so, how he could have failed to ask Neville this, in almost four years of knowing him.

"Yes, they were talking about Neville's parents," said Dumbledore. "His father, Frank, was an Auror just like Professor Moody. He and his wife were tortured for information about Voldemort's whereabouts after he lost his powers, as you heard."

"So they're dead?" said Harry quietly.

"No," said Dumbledore, his voice full of bitterness Harry had never heard there before. "They are insane. They are both in St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries. I believe Neville visits them, with his grandmother, during the holidays. They do not recognize him."

Harry looked at Gabrielle as a wave of sorrow and horror overcame him. He'd lived in the same dorm with Neville for almost four years and never bothered to find out.

Another issue came to his mind and he had to ask. "Sir, Professor Snape. He was a Death Eater?"

"In a different time he was Harry."

"Why do you think he has stopped supporting Voldemort sir?"

Dumbledore's blue eyes locked on Harry's eyes for several seconds before he answered. "That is a matter between Professor Snape and myself Harry." With those words Harry knew the interview was over. He took Gabrielle's hand and they walked toward the door. As he touched the knob Dumbledore made one final request. "Please do not speak of Neville's parents to anybody else. I know Miss Granger and Miss Delacour's sister will find out, but no one else. He has the right to let people know when he is ready."

"Yes sir."

"And Harry,"

"Yes sir?"

"Good luck on the third task."

Draco's punishment had indeed been severe as the rumors flew around the Great Hall at dinner. The giant hourglass of emeralds which counted the Slytherin's house points was down one hundred and fifty jewels. One hundred for Malfoy and twenty-five each for Crabbe and Goyle. The rumors also proclaimed Malfoy had been assigned four weeks of detentions, one week each with Professor's Sprout, Flitwick, McGonagall and Hagrid.

"Haven't seen that in a while." George said.

"Worst way to get extended detentions." Fred agreed.

"Why?" Harry asked. "What does it matter he has the detentions spread over four professors?"

"No Professor has that much bad stuff they can make a student do." George explained.

"If you get extended detentions with a single Professor, after about week, the really bad stuff is over."

"And the rest of the time is spent doing annoying but minor stuff."

"But by having the detention spread over four different professors; Malfoy will not get off easy."

"Especially with it ending with Hagrid. I expect that will be the worst week of the lot."

Hermione had pulled out her planner and was looking at the month to come. "I think it was planned that way to be exceptionally interesting for Malfoy." She said.

"Why?" Harry asked again.

"That's the week of the third task, Harry."

"You don't think Malfoy is going to put the creatures in the Maze do you?"

"No, most likely not." Hermione replied. "But you are going to have a maze with various creatures wandering around in it for quite some

time." She paused for a seconds to let the implications sink in. "Someone's going to have to clean it up once it's over." She said finally with a smirk. "I doubt if Hagrid will let him use a wand, in fact knowing Hagrid, he might not even let him use a shovel."

Everyone around chuckled at those thoughts.

"Harry." Ginny glanced up from her plate as she asked a question that had puzzled her since she had heard what had happened. "How did you know Gabrielle was in trouble? I mean, if I'm not mistaken you're in Divination at the same time we're in Herbology."

Harry looked up at her and then at his three bond mates. No explanation crossed his mind. He was just about to say he had skipped Divinations when she took that excuse away.

"Ron found your book bag at the bottom of the ladder when he came down." Ginny said. "He's the one who put it in your dorm."

"Oh...uh," Harry found himself looking down the table at his former best friend who was chatting with Seamus about something. "Guess I should thank him."

" 'arry, I don't want to lie to 'er." Gabrielle thoughts came through. "She's been a very good friend and I don't want to lie to a friend."

Harry looked at Gabrielle who had a pleading look in her eyes. "Of course we can tell her if you want." Harry queried both Fleur and Hermione without looking at them and they both agreed that it should be Gabrielle's choice as long as she believed Ginny would keep the secret.

In those several seconds as Gabrielle and Harry looked at each other, Ginny started wondering if Luna had been right all along. Visions of Harry being tied to a stake while Gabrielle was dancing around him started going through her mind.

"Ginny." Gabrielle started. "If you can keep a secret, we can tell you 'ow 'e knew."

"Pretty soon it's not going to be much of a secret." Harry muttered.

Ginny's eye went wide. "Luna was right? You're..." She said quite loudly and only the look from Harry, Gabrielle, Fleur and Hermione stopped her from continuing. In a much quieter voice she said "Oh...sorry. If you can trust me with your secret, I promise not to tell anyone."

At the Ravenclaw table a petite blond smiled to herself as she heard Ginny's exclamation. She really hoped Gabrielle's lunar charts were accurate. Luna really liked Harry's hair.

Harry looked around to make sure no one was listening and especially that no beetles were in sight. "Ginny, this might be hard for you, but the only place we feel is safe enough to discuss what is going on is in the Chamber. Do you feel up to going back down there?"

Ginny paled but after a few seconds her Gryffindor courage came through and she nodded.

"Ok, then right after dinner we'll head down." Harry said quietly. "Hermione can you go ahead and warn Sirius?"

"Yes, it's Gabrielle and my time to grab food from the kitchens for Sirius anyway." Hermione looked at Gabrielle and without a word, both of them got up and left the table with Ginny looking confused.

"We'll explain, we promise." Harry said to her. "Finish eating and we'll go down there shortly. Fleur and I'll be with you the whole time."

"Thanks Harry." Ginny replied with a warm but nervous smile.

Hermione and Gabrielle made their way to the kitchen. As the house-elves busied themselves getting the food put in containers with freshness charms, Hermione looked over at the fireplace and saw Winky sitting on the same stool as before. A row of empty butterbeer bottles beside her. As Hermione watched her the little elf gave a hiccup and swayed on her stool. A wave of guilt and sadness washed over her. It had been a long time since she thought of the little elf. She had been so happy with having Fleur to spend time with and with her bond with Harry that her concern of house-elves in general and this one in particular had disappeared.

Harry was still at the table when he felt the sadness of Hermione wash over the bond. "What is it love?" He immediately queried.

"It's Winky." Hermione replied. "She's miserable and I can't do anything for her."

Harry couldn't think of anything to suggest but then looked over at Fleur, "What about asking Fleur, she might have some advice since she's lived with house elves her whole life."

"Fleur?"

"Yes 'ermione."

"You remember me telling you about Winky, the house elf we argued about earlier?"

"Yes."

"She's still very sad and staying drunk. Do you know of anything I can do to cheer her up?"

"What does she want?"

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"What does she want to cheer her up?" Fleur asked.

"She wants her family back, but they probably won't take her back. In fact it's Mr. Crouch who might be dead."

"What else besides that would she want?"

"I don't know." Hermione replied.

"Ask 'er."

Hermione looked at the hiccupping elf again. "I'll try." She walked over to the fireplace and knelt down next to diminutive elf.

"Hi Winky, it's me."

"You be the one who –hic- said bad things –hic- about my Master."

"I'm sorry Winky. But Mr. Crouch is no longer your Master."

"Mas –hic-ter needs his Winky." The house-elf said looking up with bleary eyes.

Gabrielle had joined Hermione now and said, "Winky, I'm Gabrielle."

Winky closed one eye and the opened it and closed the other trying to find one that was less blurred. "Do you –hic- know my Master?"

"I'm sorry Winky, I don't, but I thought he released you?"

"Master needs – hic – his Winky. He has secrets that need keepen." Winky said.

"Winky, if your old Master doesn't take you back," Hermione said tenderly, but at the words Winky started crying,"if he doesn't take you back, is there anything else that you would like to do? Maybe I can help you get a job you like."

"Winky don't want –hic- job, Winky wants a family." The elf said glaring at Hermione as she tried to keep her eyes open but ended up looking like she was winking.

Hermione remembered the discussion with Fleur and understood what the elf wanted. "Fleur do you know of a family who needs an elf?"

"Winky, would you like a family that might be very large someday?" Gabrielle asked.

Hermione looked at her bond sister as Fleur responded "Non, but I can ask father."

Winky looked at Gabrielle, "What family would –hic- want a disgraced elf?"

Gabrielle looked at Hermione before turning back to Winky, "Eet's not a real family yet, but it will be someday. Zere will be a wizard and Zree witches and ze possibility of lots of children."

"Children?" Hermione asked as what Gabrielle was suggesting to Winky clicked.

"There will be –hic- children?" Winky asked as her eyes finally became focused. "Winky likes taking care –hic- of children."

"Gabrielle, we can't" Hermione cried out mentally.

"Why not 'Ermione?"

"It's not right. I can't have a slave."

"Ermione we've already discussed zis." Fleur said.

"Yes but.."

"What is the primary reason for freedom?" Fleur asked.

"There are lots of reasons to be free, but the whole underlying purpose is the ability to choose." Hermione replied.

"Exactly and isn't zat exactly what you are denying Winky? Ze ability to choose what she wants?" Fleur replied.

"But if she becomes our servant, she loses that right to choose in the future." Hermione argued.

"We already discussed ze 'ouse-elf bond and zat it's not real slavery, but if you are concerned about zeir choice in ze future, give it to zem." Fleur said.

"What do you mean?"

"Once you 'ave bonded with an elf, zey must follow your orders right?"

"Exactly why I don't..."

"Then give 'er ze order to immediately tell you if she ever wants to be free or not do something zat you or we tell 'er to do."

"But..." Hermione's argument died at that point but she wanted to ask the one person who was the center person in their family.
"Harry?"

"Yes love?"

"Have you been listening?"

"Sort of."

"What do you think?"

"I just want you, Fleur and Gabrielle to be happy." Harry replied. "I'm not sure what we would have a house elf do until sometime in the future but if you can figure all that out, I will support you whatever you decide."

"Thanks Harry. I love you."

"I love you Hermione."

Hermione looked at Gabrielle and nodded.

"Winky, we need you to sober up." Gabrielle said. "When ze zird task is over come find 'ermione or me and we will tell you about ze family we 'ave in mind. Eet's a little strange and it will be a few years before it's a real family wiz a 'ouse, but we hope you will accept it."

The little elf looked at Gabrielle, "No house –hic–"

"Not yet, but someday zere will be a 'ouse and lots of children."

"Lots?" Harry asked nervously.

" 'Arry we know you want a family." Gabrielle said. "And I want to 'ave you children when we are older."

Two other witches agreed with her sentiments.

Ginny had no idea why Harry's face had drained of color and Fleur was giggling behind her hand.

"Lots -hic- of children?" Winky asked.

Gabrielle put her arms gently around the little elf and said quietly. "Lots."

A short time later Harry and Fleur were guiding Ginny into Moaning Myrtle bathroom. They had to pause as she started trembling. Memories of two years prior rushing back to her. Harry gave her a friendly hug. "It'll be alright. We go down there several times a week."

"You do?" Ginny asked. "So that's where you disappear too?"

"Yes."

Ginny looked around. "I don't remember, but it still looks so familiar."

Harry walked over to the wall and hissed the door open. Slowly the three of them made their way down the steps. Ginny continually looked around all the time as if expecting something to happen. Finally they made it to the bottom of the steps and started down the tunnel. The huge snakeskin was now gone and the path was cleared from the many times they had traversed the tunnel. Finally they reached the doors to the Chamber and Harry could see the color drain from Ginny's face.

"It really is alright. Hermione and Gabrielle are already in there."

"H..how?" Ginny asked nervously. "I...I thought you had...had to be a parselmouth."

"We'll explain." Harry promised and nodded at Fleur who hissed and the doors opened.

When they had entered Lupin greeted them warmly.

"Professor?" Ginny asked "What are you doing down here?"

"I've been taking care of that overgrown garden snake that was down here."

That's when Ginny noticed where they had left the Basilisk two years prior was now empty. Her eyes turned to Harry. "What happened to it?"

"We'll explain shortly." Harry replied. "Ginny, we aren't going to tease you like we've teased Moony and your brothers."

"Brothers?" Ginny asked and then the answer came to her. "Fred and George?"

"Yes. They know our secret." Harry replied. "They also helped me in another fashion, but that's for later. Now I'm just going to come out and tell you. Understand we wanted to keep this as much a secret as possible but had to tell people on occasion. So please do not repeat what we are going to say to you. Not to anyone."

"Of course Harry."

Gabrielle took that time to speak up. "Ginny, Luna was somewhat correct. Ze Veela 'ave a love bond. And 'Arry and I are bonded." At the look on Ginny's face, "But I promise zere were no chains or dancing." That caused Fleur and Harry to look at her strangely.

"When?"

"Before I ever met you." Gabrielle replied. "Zat was ze reason we were not seen after ze second task. I'm sorry for misleading you, but I hope you understand. We are trying to keep zis a secret until zis summer."

"Oh." Was all Ginny could say.

"Zere's more." Gabrielle continued. "My sister and I both claimed 'Arry as I our bond mate." When she said that Fleur came over to Harry. "She and I both are bonded with 'Arry."

Ginny sat down with her eyes losing focus.

"Ginny." Hermione said. "There is one other thing and this might shock you. There was problem with my bo...with Fleur and Gabrielle bonding with Harry and they needed someone Harry would trust to help them. I was that person. While I was helping them bond, I...I was given the opportunity to join them." Hermione's eyes caught Ginny's.

"You bonded too?" Ginny asked. "But I thought...you always said."

"That Harry was my best friend?" Hermione finished. "I did say that and it's still true, but I also realized that he meant more to me than just friends. I realized I loved him." Hermione looked at her bond mate and smiled and then she looked back at Ginny. "When I was helping them bond, I found out Harry loved me too. My bond sisters decided to ask me to join them and I took the opportunity and yes I am also love bonded to Harry."

Ginny looked at the three witches who had moved habitually toward their bond mate, a boy, not a man she had a crush on, and knew she still did. "I guess there's not room for a fourth?" She asked only half jokingly.

Harry grimaced but then smiled at the red-head. "I'm sorry Ginny. I know you had a crush on me and maybe even have true feelings, but to me you're my sister. A beautiful young lady I want to see grow up and be happy." Harry looked at his three bond mates. "Even if there were different feelings, the bond is closed and it can't be changed."

"I understand Harry." Ginny said. "Thank you for telling me."

"Gabrielle refused to lie to you about it." Harry said. "You've been a very good friend to her, so it's the least we could. But please do not let anyone, especially Ron or your mother know about this."

"I won't." Ginny replied but still looking a little dazed.

"Now there is one more thing." Harry said. "The way I knew Gabrielle was in trouble. She and I share our thoughts and emotions. As soon as Malfoy was near her, I felt her fear. I knew what was happening. That's why I dropped my bag and ran to her. Not that she needed my help."

"Non, I desperately needed you 'Arry." Gabrielle said. "I needed you to do what you did."

"What did he do?" Ginny asked.

Gabrielle looked down at the ground, then back at her friend. "He showed me that he really loves me. It might seem silly since I can

feel his love in our bond, but even when he saw my...my other part he proved it didn't matter to him."

Harry wrapped his arms around her, "Angel, I will always be there for you and I will always love you because of this." He placed his hand over her heart.

"So you can share emotions and hear thoughts?" Ginny asked.

"Yes."

Ginny thought for a few seconds then with a wry smile, "After years of wanting privacy from six older siblings, I doubt I would have been a good fit anyway. I get tired of sharing."

"Speaking of sharing." Harry said turning back to Ginny "There is one last thing, the basilisk. Professor Dumbledore gave me the rights to it..."

"Of course he did, you killed it." Ginny exclaimed.

"He still didn't need to, but he did. Moony rendered it down and we've been selling it for a very large sum of galleons." Harry said. "And I plan on giving you and Ron some of that money."

"Harry, no, I don't deserve it." Ginny exclaimed. "If it hadn't been for my stupidity with that diary, you would never have had to risk your life."

"Ginny, you suffered enough because of it and I...we want you to have some of the gold. I need to talk to your father first, but I'm planning on giving you and Ron ten thousand galleons each."

"I can't...you can't..that's too much." Ginny looked down at her second hand robes and fervently wanted to both win this argument and lose it.

"I can and I will. I want to see my little sister in new robes next year." Harry smiled at her. "And when Quidditch starts back up, I expect to see you trying out for the team on your new broom."

"New broom?"

After a few more discussions with Ginny, Gabrielle escorted her back into the castle while the rest of the people started discussing what had been learned that day.

"So Professor Snape was a former Death Eater?" Hermione asked.

"Yeah, supposedly he turned spy for Dumbledore." Harry replied still not convinced that it was possible that Snape was a good guy. Though he remembered that he had been his mother's friend.

"Dumbledore is right in expecting Lucius will try legal actions to classify Veela as a subhuman group." Lupin said. "He might not succeed the first time, but eventually it might. What comes out in the Prophet will go a long way in swaying future opinions."

"Skeeter." Hermione said quickly. "As soon as she gets word of this, she'll be buzzing around the castle getting Malfoy's statements. We need that map and we need it quickly. We have got to get to her before she can write her story."

"We'll talk to Moody first thing in the morning and we'll get that map."

A/N: Slow one day chapter but that did clean up some loose ends. I really thought the pensieve memory was very important in Canon. It's where Harry found out that Snape was previously a Death Eater and about Neville's parents.

My updates might be erratic in the coming weeks. I have job interviews coming up, I'm moving to Virginia in two weeks, and my daughter is graduating High School. I am going to try to get this story through the third task before all of that happens but I can't guarantee it.

Chapter 25

As Ginny and Gabrielle walked up the magically lit tunnel headed back to the Bathroom and the castle, Ginny looked at Gabrielle, "So it's all true then. You three are all love bonded to Harry?"

"Yes it is Ginny."

They walked on in silence for a while and then Ginny finally had to ask. "Can I ask why you and Fleur invited Hermione to join the bond? I know she said she found they loved each other, but if he already lo.." Ginny suddenly stopped as she remembered that Gabrielle had just made a big deal of Harry telling her that he loved her. "If Harry wasn't in love with you, but was in love with Hermione, why did..."

"Why did 'e bond with us?" Gabrielle finished the question. Gabrielle studied her friend for a few seconds and decided on the truth "I'll tell you what 'Arry will never tell you and you are not to repeat to anyone at anytime. My sister and I initiated ze bond without 'is permission. 'e 'ad no idea what we were doing and at ze time we weren't really controlling ourselves either."

"You..you trapped him into this?" Ginny exclaimed as her eyes flew open wide.

"Yes and no Ginny. Yes we started ze bond without 'im knowing it, but 'e could 'ave rejected ze bond. If 'e had, my sister and I would either be dead or worse. It's a little more complicated zan zat but zat is ze..ze..main zing." Gabrielle looked away and then back at Ginny. "Does 'e look unhappy to you? Do you feel we trapped 'im into loving us? Eet took time, but 'e does now love us. But to answer your original question, when 'e agreed to bond with us, 'arry was giving us our lives, non...more zan our lives back. When we found zat 'ermione loved 'im and 'e loved 'er, we wanted 'arry to be 'appy. It was ze right zing to do and one my sister and I will never regret. 'ermione is my bond sister now and a wonderful person."

"I'm sorry." Ginny said. "I..I spoke without thinking. I guess I'm jealous ...of you, of Fleur and Hermione."

A realization hit Gabrielle. "You lied didn't you? When you said zat zing about 'aving brothers and not wanting to share?"

Ginny blushed as she realized she had been found out. "Maybe or it was just me wanting to get the last word in about it." She sighed and tried to smile at her friend. "Yes, I lied. I wish...I wish that I could have Harry look at me as he looks at you or Hermione." She tried another attempt at a smile. "But I didn't lie when I said I prefer to be his friend or his sister rather than no one to him." Ginny looked down the tunnel and stared for a few seconds before returning to meet Gabrielle's gaze. "I will also admit that somewhere deep down inside, I always hoped maybe it wouldn't work out between you and Harry." At Gabrielle's slightly raised eyebrow Ginny quickly added. "I would never have done anything to stop it. I hope I proved that in the last few months. It's just you've been very honest with me, and I want to be the same with you." Ginny let out a another sigh. "At least now I know it's time I moved on. Maybe find that someone special for me."

"Zat Ravenclaw Michael Corner keeps looking at you when we're eating in ze Great 'all." Gabrielle said with a smile. "I zink 'e likes you."

"I thought he's been looking at you."

"Non, it's definitely been you 'e is looking at."

Ginny finally managed her smile. "Friends still?"

"Of course. 'onesty should never kill a friendship."

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The next morning, Harry approached Moody with a singular purpose. He wanted the map. They needed to find Rita Skeeter before an article could be written about Gabrielle and Veela in general. Harry had lain awake for hours the previous night thinking of what would happen if that story came out. He didn't want Gabrielle or Fleur to go through what they would face if it did.

"Sir," Started a very determined looking Harry Potter to the gnarled Defense Professor. "I need the map and I need it today."

"Is that so Potter?" Moody said. His magical eye racing back and forth as his real eye stayed locked on Harry.

"Yes sir." Harry replied and continued on in a very determined but cool voice. "You heard of the attack on Gabrielle yesterday? Obviously the map was doing you no good in preventing it. I will protect her to the best of my ability and part of that ability is that map." Which was true since getting to Skeeter went a long way to protecting Gabrielle.

"Sounds to me like she didn't need any help." Moody replied, but as Harry's green eyes did what very few people could do and stayed locked on Moody's good eye he continued. "But I see you're determined in this." He reached into his pocket and pulled out the parchment in question. He stared at it a few seconds and then passed it over to Harry.

"Thank you sir. If you need to borrow it, let me know. I just need to make sure I protect Gabrielle."

Harry kept the smile off his face until he was well away from Moody, but after two staircases and three corners had passed, he smile and sent out a warm message to his bond mates. "I have it."

Harry was shocked when Hermione suggested that he skive off History of Magic so he could keep an eye on the Map. "We have to stop her Harry." She said. "I'll come up with something to tell Binns and you'll look over my notes later."

"What if I just give it to Sirius or Remus to watch?"

"And how would they let us know in a timely manner if they see her?"

"Good point."

A short time later Harry was in Moaning Myrtle's bathroom keeping an eye on the map. It was only a short time later he had developed a headache as he continually tried to watch all the dots looking for the name Rita Skeeter.

"Harry, What are you doing?" the voice of Myrtle asked.

Harry looked at the silvery ghost who had approached quietly. Harry quickly tried to put the map away but Myrtle had already seen it. "Oh you have your father's map."

"You...you know about it?"

"I was dead long before your father went to school here Harry. " Myrtle explained. "I used to watch him as his friends terrorized the castle. He wasn't very nice to me until his last year."

"What happened then?"

"Lily Evans dragged him and all of his friends in here and made them apologize to me."

Harry smiled at the thought of his mother doing that. Then he looked at the ghost. "Then you were here when Rita Skeeter went to school here."

Myrtle suddenly zoomed up and into a stall where Harry heard water splash. A short time later she reappeared. "I'm sorry Harry, but just hearing that..that....bad witch's name makes me mad. She was much worse than Olive Hornby. She'd make up rumors of people and then watch what happened."

"She's still doing exactly that, but now she's getting paid for it." Harry explained. He then nodded at his map. "I am keeping an eye out for her. We think she is sneaking into Hogwarts."

"Can I help?" Myrtle asked as she peered over Harry's shoulder. When her chin accidentally passed into his body he shuddered at the cold. "Sorry." She said in a contrite voice.

"That's fine Myrtle." Harry replied and he moved the map so she could see it as well. "I'm finding it very difficult and tedious trying to watch all the dots at once."

As Harry looked at the map he noticed Moody in his office. He found it strange that he never seemed to move. A short time later Fleur arrived and spelled Harry, but Myrtle's eyes never left the map. The surveillance continued with Hermione and Gabrielle each taking turns. When night came and it was close to curfew Harry was about to close the map when Myrtle made an offer.

"Leave it Harry, I'll keep watching. I don't need sleep and it's better than spending time in my toilet."

Harry thought about the last times he had given up the map, but Myrtle seemed to really want to help. He looked at Fleur who was there with him, but she just shrugged. "Ok, but please make sure it doesn't get wet. No tantrums during the night ok."

"I wouldn't do that Harry." The ghost replied, and then she zipped around the bathroom before coming to a rest next to the map she said "Thank you Harry."

The next morning Harry was having a wonderful dream when a sudden coldness ran through his entire body. It was like being hit with a bucket of cold water and he awoke instantly. Looking around wildly and about to yell out he found himself looking at Moaning Myrtle floating next to him. "Myrtle what are you doing here?" Harry whispered.

"She's here." Myrtle replied.

"Wh..." Harry started to whisper then remembered what Myrtle had been doing. "Rita?"

Myrtle's silvery head nodded.

"Thanks Myrtle." Harry said and then on impulse he put his lips on the ethereal spot that was her silvery cheek. The icy cold seared through his lips but he felt it was worth it as he watched her silver hand float up to her quickly darkening cheek as she blushed.

"It..It was nothing Harry."

Harry noticed only a faint light was coming through the windows suggesting it was still very early. "Good, she'll be easier to find with no one around." He thought. "Can you go back and keep an eye on her." He whispered to the ghost. "We'll be there shortly."

Myrtle still had a blush on her cheek and it was a second before she answered. "Anything for you Harry." And she was gone.

Harry had never tried to wake up his bond mates over their bond but he gently started trying it with Hermione. When he finally succeeded at waking her up he found out she was not happy. But it only took two words to get her to calm down.

"She's here."

"Who..what..." But Hermione suddenly knew who Harry was talking about. "Skeeter?"

"Myrtle just woke me up. She said she saw Rita on the map."

Hermione was fully awake in an instant and before Harry had started trying to wake Fleur and Gabrielle, she already had her clothes on and was out of her dorm. She had a score to settle and she intended on settling it quickly. The other two witches took a little while longer to wake up but within twenty minutes all of them were in Myrtle's bathroom.

When Fleur and Gabrielle walked into the bathroom, Hermione and Harry were already looking at the map. Harry pointed to the dot clearly marked Rita Skeeter. It appeared she was in the hedges near the front door.

"We must have walked right past her."

"You did, but we were afraid to say anything or you might have scared her away." Hermione said. "We thought she might try to follow you in."

"What are we going to do to catch 'er?"

"I have this ready." Hermione said holding up a jar. "It has an unbreakable charm on it so she can't get out. So all we have to do is sneak up on her and capture her."

"Even with the cloak we can't sneak up on her if she's in the hedges. There could be a lot of beetles in there." Harry commented.

"Zen we need to get 'er away from ze 'edges."

"Any ideas of how to do that?"

"She's 'ere to get information on me, so let's give some to 'er." Gabrielle suggested. She quickly explained her idea. Five minutes later Harry and Gabrielle walked out the front door arm in arm.

Hermione came out at the same time under the invisibility cloak. Fleur stayed in the bathroom to coordinate with the map.

After clearing the door, Harry turned to Gabrielle, "Love, we have to tell someone."

"We can't 'Arry. What if my father finds out?" Gabrielle replied with the made up story.

Harry looked as if he was making sure no one was listening. "Let's go over there and talk about it." He nodded across the lawn to a small tree. He pulled Gabrielle's hand and started in that direction.

As expected, as soon as Harry and Gabrielle left, Hermione watched an overgrown beetle fly out of the hedges and follow them. Fleur confirmed the beetle was Rita, and when Harry and Gabrielle stopped next to a small tree, the beetle settled down on a branch. The Daily Prophet reporter was too engrossed in the conversation between her subjects that she didn't notice the clear jar descending over her head until it was too late. Before she could react, a lid closed over the jar.

"Hello Rita." A muffled voice came through the glass. Rita instantly recognized it as Hermione Granger. "I'd not try anything. There is an unbreakable charm on this jar."

"She fell for it, did she?"

"Just like we knew she would."

"What should we do with her?" Harry asked.

"Stun her and put her in a spider's web?" Hermione suggested. "She is a beetle."

"Wonder if Trevor the toad likes beetles?" Harry asked.

"Good question. We can ask Neville at breakfast."

"Non, we are going to do much better zan zat." Fleur said. "We are going to make a deal with 'er."

"A WHAT?" Hermione's shout through the bond gave Harry a headache. "You want to deal with this...this.." Hermione was waving the jar around causing Rita to become ill.

"If she were to disappear, someone else would eventually write ze story," Fleur explained, "but if we can control what she writes in regards to 'arry and us, it would be much better."

"I'd prefer keeping her in the jar for a couple of months." Hermione said. "Then deal with her."

"If we do zat she will lose 'er job and ze power we want to use." Fleur replied. "Zis is similar to politics 'ermione, sometimes to further your own goals, you 'ave to do something you don't want to do."

"I don't want to do that." Harry said. "I just want a normal life and have her and everyone else leave me alone."

"Love." Fleur's thoughts were softer toward her bondmate. "I know zat is what you want, but 'as ignoring it made it go away? As much as you don't like it, you will always be 'Arry Potter. Unless you want others to always control what is said about you, you must stand up to ze public. Zis is a perfect opportunity. We not only can influence what is written about Gabrielle, but about you for years to come."

"I still hate the idea of working with Skeeter." Harry said. "After the story she wrote on Hermione and Hagrid this year and Remus last year, not to mention the one on me last week."

"As I said, sometimes you 'ave to do what you don't want to do." Fleur explained. "We can neutralize ze influence of ze galleons spent at ze Prophet by 'aving some kind of control over zeir most famous writer."

"Going to bed with the enemy?" Hermione replied.

"More like making 'er go to bed with someone else." Fleur replied. "She's going to 'ave to write some stories she really isn't going to like. We'll 'ave to give 'er something, maybe interviews with you 'arry and ze exclusive for us during the summer with ze agreement zat we approve what she writes."

Harry again admired his older bond mate's astuteness. "Hermione, as much as I hate this bug for the story she wrote about you and me, I have to agree with Fleur. Besides, I think one of the first articles she will need to write is an apology to you."

"Do you really think she'll do it?" Hermione asked. "Apologize, I mean."

"If she doesn't, there is always the jar for two months."

Hermione put the jar into her robe pocket and they started back to the castle.

"Chamber?" Gabrielle asked.

"No. I don't want her down there and if she turns back into a beetle and escapes there are way too many places to hide." Harry said.

"Where?" Hermione asked. "Almost every room in the castle has a window."

"I guess Myrtle's bathroom." Harry replied but then had another thought. "Maybe Dobby or Winky has a better place."

"I don't think Winky has left the kitchens much, but Dobby might know of a place."

"You go ahead so she doesn't hear what I say to Dobby."

When Hermione was safely out of range, Harry called "Dobby."

"What can Dobby do for Harry Potter sir?" The elf replied as he popped into sight next to Harry.

"Good morning Dobby. I wanted to know if you know of a room in the castle where not even a bug could hide or fly away. It would also have to be a place no one would interrupt."

Dobby's ears started wagging in happiness as he clapped his hands together. "Dobby knows the perfect place, sir!" he said cheerfully. "Dobby heard tell of it from the other house elves when he came to Hogwarts, sir. It is known by us as the Come and Go Room, sir, or else as the Room of Requirement!"

"Why?" asked Harry curiously.

"Because it is a room that a person can only enter," said Dobby seriously, when they have real need of it. Sometimes it is there, and sometimes it is not, but when it appears, it is always equipped for the seeker's needs. Dobby has used it, sir," said the elf, dropping his voice and looking guilty, "when Winky has been very drunk; he has hidden her in the Room of Requirement and he has found antidotes to Butterbeer there, and a nice elf-sized bed to settle her on while she sleeps it off, sir... and Dobby knows Mr Filch has found extra cleaning materials there when he has run short, sir, and □"

"And if you really needed a bathroom," said Harry, suddenly remembering something Dumbledore had said at the Yule Ball, "would it fill itself with chamber pots?"

"Dobby expects so sir." said Dobby, nodding earnestly. "It is a most amazing room, sir."

"Sounds like exactly what we need. Can you show it to me?" Harry asked.

"Dobby can do that sir. We's need to go to the seventh floor wheres the tapestry that has the trolls being taught ballet."

A few minutes later Harry was pacing in front of the wall opposite from the tapestry thinking hard "I need a place where we can talk to Skeeter and she can't get away." He turned and paced back the other way continuing his request. "A place where a beetle can't escape." As he finished the third walk past the wall a door appeared. Harry looked at it questioning and then over at Dobby who was standing nervously in front of the tapestry. Harry turned back to the door and pulled it open and walked inside. He found himself in a small room that was completely white. There wasn't a nook or crevice to be found. There were even five chairs that seemed to be made in one piece and attached to the floor.

"Come up here and bring the jar. This room is amazing." Harry called to his bond mates. He had already told them what Dobby had said the room would do, but told them to wait until he checked it out before dragging Skeeter through the castle. He turned to Dobby.

"Thank you Dobby. If there is anything I can do for you, let me know."

Dobby looked at the floor and then back at Harry. "Harry Potter sir, I was talking to Winky and she says that your bondmate is going to find her a family with a wizard and three witches and children." He looked down again. "Dobby didn't tell your secrets but is it Harry Potter's family that she is asking Winky to bond with?"

"Yes Dobby. Hermione is sad to see Winky so miserable and she and Gabrielle are offering to bond with her if she can become sober."

"Winky is doing much better, Harry Potter sir. Winky's eating regularly now and is weaning off the butterbeer slowly." Dobby said. "Winky keeps saying she is going to be able to take care of children."

"I'm only fourteen and I've got three witches and a house-elf already counting my future children." Harry muttered as he ran his hand through his hair. "I'm glad Winky is doing better Dobby."

"Harry Potter just asked if there was anything he could do for Dobby?" Dobby asked looking nervously at the floor.

"Anything Dobby. You've been a very good friend. You saved me with the Gillyweed and from Malfoy."

"Dobby wanted to ask if...if Harry Potter would consider asking Dobby to be his elf as well."

That was the last thing Harry expected to hear Dobby ask for. "But Dobby I thought you..you liked being free."

"Dobby does sir...Dobby does indeed, but Dobby would prefer to being Harry Potter's elf than being free." Dobby replied as he continued to look nervous. "Dobby thinks he would like children too, though Dobby can't say he enjoyed young Mr. Malfoy."

"I can imagine." Harry replied thinking what a brat Draco probably had been. "I will need to discuss it with my bond mates. It will affect them as well, but I will not object with you becoming a member of my family."

"Thank you Harry Potter sir, Thank you."

"You're welcome Dobby, but now I need you to leave so Rita Skeeter doesn't see you."

A couple of minutes later the three bond mates made it to the room. They were amazed at what the room had created. It was perfect for what they wanted to do. The jar was uncovered and placed on one of the chairs and everyone had their wands out. A spell from Hermione undid the lid and the large beetle flew out and started zooming around the room looking for a place to escape or hide.

"Rita, there is no escape from this room." Harry said to the buzzing insect. It was another minute of zooming around before the beetle finally agreed. It finally came to rest and morphed into the heavy jawed woman Harry remembered from the weighing of the wands.

"HOW DARE YOU?" Rita screamed at them. "HOW DARE YOU KIDNAP ME?"

A cold look descended in Harry's eyes as he faced the woman who had caused Hermione pain and was here just to cause trouble for Gabrielle and possible Fleur. "Maybe because I'm disturbed and dangerous." He replied in a cold voice. "Isn't that what you wrote?" Harry eyes focused even more on the woman in front of them. "And to make sure I don't have a NEED to plea for attention, I better do this. Expeliarmus!" and Rita's wand flew out of her Magenta colored robes.

Rita backed away from Harry with a look of pure terror in her eyes. She kept backing until she found herself with her back to a wall.

Harry looked over at Hermione and with a gesture, she picked up the conversation. "I wanted to feed you to a spider or a toad." Hermione said and smiled at the additional look of panic crossing the reporters face. "We know why you are here today. You were going to get quotes to make an article that puts Gabrielle Delacour and possibly Veela in general in a bad light after the supposed attack on Draco Malfoy."

Rita was first surprised that they knew the exact reason she was here, and then was scared of what that meant. Though she realized

that if they really wanted her dead, she would probably have already been fed to the toad. "I have it on very good authority that the 'Veela' did attack young Malfoy causing him a great deal of harm and only the quick actions of his friends saved his life."

Harry couldn't help but laugh. "I witnessed the confrontation and either you know the truth and are ignoring it for a bigger story or you believe the lies you've been told. The only injury Malfoy suffered was to his pride when he pissed in his pants and the only quick action his friends took was running away and leaving him lying on the ground where he was frozen with fear." Harry's green eyes were now very dark. "Tell me Rita, were you told that Malfoy was trying to grope Gabrielle and possibly more?"

The look on Rita's face told them she couldn't care less for the truth.

"Someone might 'ave tried to rape my sister and you want to write an article making 'er look bad." Fleur spat.

"Sister?" Rita's eyes immediately found the other young lady in the room. "So you're the creature that attacked Mr. Malfoy's son."

Harry's wand was under her chin in less than a second. "If you EVER call her that again, I will not be responsible for what I do, remember I am disturbed!" The wand poked her a little harder. "I agree with Hermione, we should have fed her to a spider."

"Non." Fleur replied. "She is not going to write zat article and she is going to work with us."

"Really my dear and why would I do that?"

"Besides you being an illegal animagus?" Fleur asked.

"That's nothing. I'd have to pay a fine if that."

"But it would be more zan zat wouldn't it? Trespassing, stealing of secrets by illegal means?" Fleur continued. "Besides once your animagus form is revealed, you'll never be able to enter a premise undetected again. In fact I would imagine zere would be a wide use of insect killing spells used to insure privacy in ze future by people who want zeir secrets kept. If you're not killed, your value as a reporter would be next to nothing."

Rita paled. She started to realize that she was in a corner and someone else held the flyswatter. "You...you mentioned working with you." Rita asked as she swallowed hard.

"We want to make you a deal." Fleur said. "You get to keep your job and your life and all you 'ave to do is write a few articles ze way we want zem written and not write anything about us or our friends without our approval."

"You're asking for a lot." Skeeter said. "If I lose my reputation, it would be just as bad for me."

"You can write anything you want about ze Ministry or ze Wizengamot." Fleur replied. She looked at Harry and made a quick query. She then turned back to Rita. "After you 'ave proven you are keeping up with your end of the bargain, we are prepared to let you interview 'Arry so you can write a real article and not ze stuff that comes out of zat quill of yours and..." Fleur allowed the last couple of things dangle for a few seconds, "We might be able to arrange for you to have an exclusive interview with Sirius Black in ze future."

"And how would you do that. The man is trying to kill Mr. Potter."

"Non, 'e isn't. We know ze truth and if you want it, deal with us." Fleur's eyes brightened. " 'Ow would it look if Rita Skeeter wrote a story zat would cause ripples in the entire justice system of this country."

"You'd be surprised about other information you might be able to get from us." Harry added. "I'll give you a freebie, did you know Ludo Bagman was running a betting pool at the World Cup and paid winners with Leprechaun gold."

Rita's eyes flashed as she immediately recognized a possible story of a senior ministry official cheating people; and if she realized that if they were telling the truth about Sirius Black, she could wring several front page stories out of that alone. She looked at the four young people in front of her and considered her options. She couldn't charge them with blackmail without having what they were blackmailing her over get out. The stories they were offering to start with were better than the story she was here to write about, especially the one about Sirius Black.

"Looks like I don't have a choice." Skeeter replied. "What do you want me to write?"

"All we ask is that you write the truth." Harry replied. "Starting with what happened between Malfoy and Gabrielle and then you can work on an apology to Hermione, one for Hagrid and recanting your article about me would be nice as well."

"Do all that and still keep my reputation?" Rita scoffed. "And do you have a way for me to do that?"

"Actually I do. Each of those articles has something in common. Someone you quoted."

"Young Malfoy?"

"Exactly." Fleur said. "Tear 'im down as a witness and zen admit you 'ave to question your earlier columns because of it. It will take time and we know zat, but you can start with zis article on Gabrielle and Veela. We'll tell you ze truth and zen you go question Draco."

"Lucius Malfoy isn't a man to cross."

"I've faced down Mr. Malfoy before when I was only twelve." Harry said coolly. "Ask him someday where his house-elf is." That gave Harry an idea. "I know his former house-elf and he might be able to provide you with information that would keep Mr. Malfoy from retaliating against you."

"If you can do that, we have a deal." Rita Skeeter replied quickly.

"Zen I want to clarify exactly what we are agreeing to." Fleur said. "We promise not to tell anyone zat you're an animagus and we will 'ave Mr. Malfoy's former 'ouse-elf talk to you. We also will give you an interview with 'Arry and give you a story on Sirius Black with ze possibility of an interview with 'im. You will write the truth of ze attack on my sister and start working toward apologies to 'ermione, 'arry and ze others. In ze future you will only print ze truth about any of us, including our friends and family."

"What if the truth doesn't reflect well for you or your families?"

"We would prefer if you ask us first to clarify, but if it is a verified truth and not taken out of context, we won't stop you from printing it." Hermione replied.

"And how do we confirm this deal? Do we take an Oath?" Rita asked.

"We both know zat magical oaths are both dangerous and can be ineffectual depending on ze interpretation of ze oath. We each 'ave something ze other wants, so we can leave it at zat."

"I think I can agree to that." Rita agreed and had to admire the young French witch. Rita reached into her handbag and pulled out a roll of parchment and a quill. Harry noticed it was not her Quick-Quotes one. She looked at Gabrielle. "Now young lady, tell me what happened..."

An hour and a half later, with breakfast entirely missed, Rita had her story including the fact it is impossible for a part Veela to transform unless very angry or scared, neither of which would have happened if she had been the one to initiate the attack. Harry promised to have Dobby meet with her at the same tree they had captured her earlier and because they didn't want her to know where they were, they returned her wand and requested she turn back into a beetle. She was put back in the jar and covered and a short time later she was flying away in search of Draco Malfoy to listen to what he would tell her.

Later that evening Rita was sitting at her desk. She thought about the four youngsters that had captured her. She considered the deal they had agreed upon and Rita knew that it was generous indeed. She looked over at the rolls of parchment of the notes she had taken from her conversation with the crazy house-elf. It definitely was enough to protect her from Lucius Malfoy. She looked back at her parchment in preparation to write her article. "If I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it well." She thought.

The next morning Harry and his bondmates were all at the table eagerly waiting for the newspaper. They were still worried that Skeeter might decide to renege on their deal. As they ate their breakfast, Malfoy and his two bodyguards strolled over shortly after he arrived in the hall. Harry and his bond mates all pulled out their wands.

"Well Potter you might want to say good bye to your..uh.." A sneer broke across his face, "girlfriend. I'm sure once word gets out about her attack on me, she'll be forced to leave the country. We don't like things like that around here."

"We both know who attacked who Ferret. Tell me, did you get the urine stains out of your robes, or did you have to buy new ones?" Harry asked and could feel the anger Malfoy had for him. At that moment owls came pouring into the Great Hall and another sneer broke out over Draco's face.

"Enjoy the news Potter. I know I will." He laughed as he turned and walked back to the Slytherin table.

The Prophet delivery owl landed in front of Harry and he quickly took his copy of the Daily Prophet. Similar owls were giving copies to Hermione and the Delacours. Nervously he unfurled the paper and breathed a sigh of relief when he read headline.

Beauxbatons Student attacked at Hogwarts

By Rita Skeeter

It was brought to this reporter's attention that an attack had happened at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the afternoon of May thirty-first. As I set off to investigate the event, I was under the impression it had been a Beauxbatons student who had attacked a Hogwarts student. I am saddened to say I was mistaken. Based on my full investigation of the accounts of that day, it is my belief, and based on the punishment meted out to the Hogwarts student in question, the belief of the Headmaster Albus Dumbledore that it was in fact Draco Malfoy, only son of Lucius Malfoy who instigated the attack upon Gabrielle Delacour. Miss Delacour is a student of Beauxbaton, daughter of Alain Delacour the Deputy Minister of Magic of France, sister of the Beauxbatons Triwizard Champion Fleur Delacour and last but not least, the love interest of our own Harry Potter.

In my interview with young Draco Malfoy, his renditions of the events were implausible at best and closer to impossible to have occurred. He asserted that while he and his friends Vincent Crabbe and Gregory Goyle were taking a stroll near the greenhouses, Miss Delacour, who is quarter Veela, transformed and attacked them

without cause. I found the explanation wanting. Though he claimed that he suffered serious injuries including being hit by Veela flame, there was no record of him reporting to the hospital wing. Also my own investigation indicates a less than full Veela cannot shift without feelings of intense anger or fear, neither of which would have happened if the events happened as described. I spoke to the young French student and found her version of the events more likely. She told me she was attempting to attend an afternoon Herbology class when young Malfoy and his two friends confronted her in an isolated area. After making disparaging remarks about her, Draco Malfoy attempted to at least grasp the young witch in a sexual manner and possibly was attempting a full sexual assault.

It is this reporter's opinion that the attack was by Mr. Malfoy upon Miss Delacour and only the fear she felt of being alone and under attack by three older students caused her to protect herself the only way she could. Even then she did not attack. An eyewitness to the events confirmed this. The eyewitness who doesn't wish to be identified had this to say. "Draco only fell down in fear as he urinated on himself while his friends were running away as fast as they could."

Though the punishment given to young Malfoy was a start, I call upon the Headmaster of Hogwarts to take steps to ensure the protection of those who are visitors to our country and I call upon the Ministry to consider if actual charges should be filed.

Finally to my loyal readers. As I was writing this article about Draco Malfoy, I realized he had provided me with several quotes in previous articles. In light of his current reprehensible actions I feel I must return to those columns in the near future and determine his credibility in those as well.

"Wow." Harry said. "She can write a good story. I didn't think she had it in her." He looked over at Hermione who was rereading the article again. He looked over at Fleur and could feel her relief. If Rita hadn't kept her end of the deal, Harry knew Fleur would have felt guilty.

He glanced up at the head table and noticed a certain pair of twinkling eyes looking in his direction. A slight nod followed. Harry gazed shifted over to the Slytherin table where voices could be heard from across the Great Hall. For an instant Draco's eyes

looked up and met his and a look of pure hatred poured out of them. Harry half expected him to pull out his wand and try to hex him from across the Hall. As Harry continued to glance around the Great Hall, he could see more and more people glaring at Malfoy. It wasn't long before the blond Slytherin stormed out of the Hall.

The article in the Daily Prophet did something extremely rare. It surprised Albus Dumbledore. After he finished reading it, he looked over at the Gryffindor Table and noticed Harry and his bonded reading the article with not a bit of surprise. Their body language indicated they had expected it. Albus knew somehow they were responsible for the content but had no idea how they made it happen. When Harry's gaze met his own, he gave the young man the slightest of nods. He then turned his attention to the Slytherin table and could see the commotion going on there. Dumbledore could imagine what was being said. He also knew he would have to once again rein in Severus. He looked over at the Potions Master who was also glaring at the Gryffindor table.

Lucius Malfoy was seething. The Daily Prophet was laid out in front of him. When he first read the article, he immediately started making plans to deal with Rita Skeeter but an owl that had appeared shortly afterwards stopped those plans. The letter was from Skeeter and it contained various secrets of his that she threatened to make public if anything were to happen to her. After an hour of pacing, he realized he had no choice at the moment. He didn't know how Skeeter knew what she knew, but he could not allow the information to be made public. He composed a letter to his son ordering him to keep his head down for the rest of the school year and to stay away from Potter and his friends.

The previous day, Sirius had been more than a little angered about the possible interview with Skeeter, but when he saw the article she had written about the attack he changed his mind. He hadn't believed Rita would live up to her end, but the proof was there in front of him. He also decided with the Aurors still investigating Crouch's disappearance and now possibly Malfoy, it would be best if he remained in the Chamber for the near future. He was enjoying the time he got to spend with Lupin and his godson while not having to worry about Dementors and the Ministry.

Owl delivery for the next week brought numerous letters for Gabrielle. Though there were a few that were from people obviously against Veela, the majority were supportive of her.

The bonded were surprised but relieved when no further actions came from Malfoy. He avoided them as much as possible, but each time he did look at them there was pure hatred in his eyes.

With the major hurdle of Skeeter resolved, they finally turned their full attention to preparing for the third task. One afternoon as Fleur and Harry were going over a healing charm Fleur knew, Hermione was studying the map when she said. "That's odd."

"What is?" Remus asked.

"Well Gabrielle and Ginny are in Defense right now, which means Moody should be in the class. See there's Gabrielle." She pointed at the dot sitting next to Ginny Weasley. "But according to the map Moody is in his office. He's been in that same spot every time I've looked at the map."

"Hmmm, let me see the map." Remus took the parchment and started casting a few spells on it. Finally he looked up. "It's got some kind of Confundus Charm on it." He handed it back to Hermione. "Probably Moody didn't like the idea of someone spying on him and made the map only see him in his office. When I get a chance, I'll see if I can break his charm."

Hermione turned back to the map and was about to put it away, when she realized something. "Harry, Fleur come look at this." When they joined her at the table, she pointed to a spot on the map. "The map shows the Quidditch field." She waited and Fleur got it right away.

"Zen we can use it for ze zird task."

"How, it doesn't show the maze." Harry asked.

"No but presuming the cup is going to be in the center of the maze, I can tell you two which direction you need to be going."

"But that would be cheating." Harry exclaimed.

"Non, it wouldn't. An advantage yes, but not cheating." Fleur replied. "For ze first task you used your broom which is a magical device and you used Gillyweed in the second task."

"But I didn't make the map." Harry argued.

"No but you didn't make your broom either." Hermione replied.

"What about Hermione helping us."

"Myrtle helped us in ze lake, did it feel like cheating." Fleur replied.

"This is different. Myrtle is a friend.."

"And 'ermione is your bondmate. Do you zink she is going to not be concerned about you? Worry about you? She still isn't going to be able to tell you about monsters or even if it's a dead end. She's only going to be able to tell you in what general direction you need to go."

Harry looked between Fleur and Hermione. "Ok, fine." He finally agreed.

As the number of days until the final task shrunk, Harry's confidence of being able to do the task rose. The work he and Fleur had put in together learning various spells was paying off. Hermione was busy helping them and preparing for her own end of year exams. Fleur was studying more as well. She'd be taking the French equivalent of the NEWTs shortly after the school year was over.

A week before the third task Harry and his bond mates found another interesting article by Rita Skeeter in the Daily Prophet. Under two large pictures of Ludo Bagman, one of him in his playing days and one as he appears now was this article.

Senior Ministry Official Implicated in Gambling Scandal

By Rita Skeeter

Working from a tip from a reliable source, I have uncovered a scandal that will rock the Wizarding World. Our own popular Ludo Bagman, former beater for the Wimbourne Wasps and currently Head of Magical Games and Sports cheated many people from their gambling winnings at the World Cup. Mr. Bagman himself, in a

serious conflict of interest due to his Ministry position ran a gambling pool at the World Cup and then he paid the winners in Leprechaun Gold which as my readers know disappears after a few hours. The very integrity of the Ministry is now in question to the entire world. In my investigation I have discovered that Mr. Bagman has a substantial gambling debt to the Goblins.

I call upon the Minister of Magic and the Department of Magical Law Enforcement to conduct a thorough investigation into this matter. Mr. Bagman should be immediately removed from his position until the investigation is completed. I call upon my readers to show their support of this investigation by owling the Minister and the head of Magical Law enforcement Amelia Bones. Finally the Daily Prophet is very interested in speaking to those people who were defrauded by Mr. Bagman. We understand the embarrassment such a situation might cause, so in return for your story to be quoted only as a defrauded individual and a magical binding statement, we offer to provide those individuals with the services of the Daily Prophet's solicitor to file a complaint against Mr. Bagman in hopes of recovering your winnings.

Story continued on page 3

Speculations on how much Bagman owes the Goblins page 4

Was the World Cup fixed? page 6

Harry looked down the table to where the Twins were reading the Prophet. Their eyes turned to his and a smile broke out on their faces. Harry saw them get up quickly and he knew they were headed for the Owlry to send a note to the Prophet. Harry quickly left his own seat and quickly caught up with them.

"If you address it to Rita directly and tell her I said to mention you're my friend, I think you'll find it will get a quicker response." Harry said to them.

Fred and George looked at each other and then at Harry. "You did this?" they asked simultaneously.

"I didn't mention your names of course, but gave her a tip to explore." Harry said. "I found that I have a little influence with her at the moment."

"Influence Rita Skeeter?" Fred replied.

"That's almost as impressive as your other news." George chimed in.

"We appreciate you doing this Harry."

"I needed to give a story to her, and that was one I could let her run with." Harry said. "I hope you can collect your winnings now."

"We have a better shot now." George said.

"Though we still expect that announcement around your birthday."

"We'll see." Harry replied.

Two days later the Prophet had another picture of Ludo Bagman. This time it was of him leaving his office with his head down. The Headline blared.

Ludo Bagman dismissed for the Ministry

by Rita Skeeter

Ludo Bagman was dismissed from his position as Head of Magical Games and Sports. As numerous owls converged on the Minister's office confirming and condemning the actions of the former Beater of the Wimbourne Wasps, the Minister of Magic is quoted as saying "I had no choice. The integrity of the entire Ministry is at stake."

According to the Minister there will be no disruption of any ongoing events involving the department. The National Quidditch League will continue as scheduled as well as the third task of the Triwizard Tournament to held next week. It was determine that due to the nature of the third task no replacement judge would be required.

Story continued on page 2.

Will Amos Diggory be the next Head of Magical Games and Sports?

Page 3

Ministry to reopen the disappearance of Bertha Jorkins. Page 5

%%%%%%%% June 24th %%%%%%%%%%

The morning of the third task finally arrived. Though confident, Harry and Fleur both felt nervous. As they finished their breakfast, Harry and Hermione were about to go to History of Magic when Professor McGonagall appeared.

"Potter, Miss Delacour the Champions will be congregating in the chamber off the Hall after breakfast," she said.

"But the task's not till tonight!" said Harry.

"I'm aware of that, Potter," she said. "The champions' families are invited to watch the final task, you know. This is simply a chance for you to greet them."

"But I don't have a family to come see me." Harry said to no one as his head of house walked away.

"Yes you do, you'll come see my family which is yours as well now." Fleur thought. "Papa and Maman can't wait to see you again."

Harry smiled at her, then said goodbye to Hermione as she left to get to Professor Binns class and then a small kiss for Gabrielle as she left for Potions. A class she had grown to abhor as much as Harry did. She was at least fortunate enough not to have it with Slytherins.

As soon as they finished their breakfast, Fleur and Harry got up from the table and started toward the room. Harry looked over at his bond mate and wanted nothing more than to hold her hand. She was his family and he couldn't wait for the day the world found out. Picking up his thoughts Fleur smiled at him. "I love you 'Arry."

"I love you my flower. Let's go see our family."

An even larger smile appeared on Fleur's face and they entered the room. They found the Delacours almost immediately and were almost to them when Harry heard. "Harry, Harry. Over here."

Harry looked around to see who was calling out to him and found himself looking at Bill and Mrs. Weasley. Fleur also turned and looked at who was calling his bond mate's name. She was about to ask Harry who they were when she saw Bill. " 'e's 'andsome." Harry heard her thoughts through the bond.

"Handsome?" Harry asked.

"Yes 'Arry I find 'im 'andsome, just as you still find Cho Chang attractive."

"But she isn't anywhere close to you, Gabrielle or Hermione."

"As zat man is nowhere near you love. I can't 'elp being attracted, but 'e could never 'ave my 'eart. Zat belongs to you."

Harry wanted nothing more than to put his arms around her and hold her. To yell out to the room that he was in love with this woman beside him.

"I zink you want 'im to be jealous of you." Fleur said.

"Maybe a little." Harry admitted. "I always thought Bill was the coolest person in the world. He's a curse breaker for Gringotts. Want me to introduce you?"

"Is 'e a friend of yours?"

"He's Ginny's and the twins' brother."

"Maybe later zen."

Harry gave a little nod to the Delacours and made his way to the Weasleys'.

"Surprise." Mrs. Weasley said excitedly as he drew near. "Thought we'd come and watch you. Harry!" She bent down to kiss him on the cheek, which he deftly sidestepped.

"Mrs. Weasley, why are you here?" Harry asked.

"As I said, we came to watch. You know I think of you as a son."

"Yet you still refuse to apologize for insulting a young lady I'm in love with, her sister and my best friend." Harry asked.

"Oh don't be silly Harry." Mrs. Weasley replied as she tried to reach over and straighten Harry's cloak. Again Harry sidestepped the attempt.

"Mrs. Weasley, I appreciate you taking time to come see me compete, but until you can offer a proper apology to Gabrielle, I have nothing further to say to you. She's part of my life and if you can't apologize and accept her..." Harry left the thought hanging and then continued after a few seconds. "As I told Ron, if you force me to choose between Gabrielle and you, you will not like the answer." He turned to Bill who was standing there with his mouth agape at the exchange. "Bill, I'm not sure if you know but your mother insulted my girlfriend who happens to be part Veela. She sent a Howler that was heard in the Great Hall."

"Harry Potter." Mrs. Weasley exclaimed. "How dare you talk to me like that? When you come to the Burrow this summer we need to have a serious talk about your attitude young man."

"Mrs. Weasley, I will not be coming to the Burrow this summer. Do you see that family?" Harry nodded toward the Delacours. "That is my girlfriend's family. They have invited Hermione and me to stay with them for the summer." He turned to rejoin the Delacours but then turned back. "I meant what I said in my letter at Easter Mrs. Weasley. I have been very thankful for what you and your family have done for me in the last three years, but I cannot and will not accept your attitude toward Gabrielle."

"HARRY!" Mrs. Weasley spoke in a voice that had everyone in the room looking at them. Bill finally stepped in and stopped his mother.

"Mum, no." He said. Bill then turned to Harry and taking him by the shoulder he led him away from his mother. "Harry, what's going on?"

"Bill what have you heard about this year?"

"Bits here and there. What's been written in the Prophet. Charlie said you were magnificent against the Dragon. He wanted to come for this event, but couldn't get time off."

"In the second task, I rescued Fleur and Gabrielle. I ended up magically exhausted, but got to spend time with Gabrielle. Afterwards we started seeing each other." Harry was picking and

choosing his words to be truthful but not tell the whole story. "Ron seemed to have a similar opinion of Veela as your mother does, and he sent a note to her. I ended up with a Howler in the middle of the Great Hall calling my girlfriend a Veela Hussy. Your mother also sent a letter blaming Hermione for causing me to have Gabrielle as a love interest."

Bill sighed. "As much as I would love to not believe it Harry, I can imagine it's true. If it does any good I'm sorry it happened."

"Your mother and father have treated me well in the last few years and I appreciate all they have done. But I can't let this go Bill. All she needs to do is apologize and accept Gabrielle and Fleur since she is someone special to me also."

Bill looked over at the Delacours then back to Harry. "I understand Harry. I'll talk with dad and let him know what's going on, though I'm sure he'll hear about it from mum tonight." He smiled and nodded over at Fleur. "The lady over there is Fleur right?"

Harry glanced over at his bond mate. "Yes."

"She's very attractive. Is she staring at you or me?"

"Are you staring at us love?"

"Of course. I can feel your anger."

"Bill thinks you're attractive."

"Most men do 'Arry, but zere is only one person who I care 'ow zey zink of me."

"You know I think you are beautiful and not just your body."

"Yes but you still zink about my black knickers a lot. You know I 'ave zem on right now."

Bill had glanced over at Fleur again and missed the expression that came over Harry's face. He looked back at Harry finally and asked "Do you know if Fleur is seeing anyone?"

Harry really wanted to roll his eyes. He could hear Fleur's mental laugh. "Krum and Hermione, and now Bill wanting to know about you. Why is everyone asking me about my bond mates?" Harry looked at Bill. "Uh..yeah she is. She'll be announcing something over the summer."

Bill grinned at Harry, "It was worth the question. Well whoever it is, he's one lucky guy."

"Very lucky." Harry agreed. "I can introduce you to her if you'd like."

"That's alright Harry. You go spend time with them and I'll walk around with Mum, maybe see Ginny and my brothers."

"Thanks Bill." Harry replied and the two of them shook hands. Harry watched as Bill escorted a red faced Molly Weasley out of the room before he joined the Delacours.

Fleur could feel Harry's anger, his frustration and his sadness. She wanted to reach out to him and hold him but couldn't so she did what she could. She sent her love. As he felt it over the bond, his eyes met hers and the sadness diminished.

"Thank you. I love you." Harry said and then turned to her parents. "Good morning Sir, Ma'am."

Mrs. Delacour gave Harry a hug. "Eet's good to see you again 'Arry. 'ow are you doing?"

Harry eyes flickered to Fleur and he smiled. "I've never been better."

Alain Delacour looked around the room, and then back at 'Arry. "Maybe we should take a walk, so we can talk a little more privately."

A/N: I made it to the day of the third task. The trumpets and horns are blaring in celebration.

They have Rita on their side (Sort of). I never liked the way JKR had Hermione deal with Skeeter and think this is much better. Hermione waited a whole year to utilize her power, and by then Rita had lost most of her influence. They have the map, but Crouch has it

confunded to not show him. Bill and Fleur still had the gaze across the room.

I have decided on what to do with Myrtle. Thanks to those who volunteered your opinions.

Chapter 26

I was 'oping I could speak to Mr. Brown." Mr. Delacour started as they walked out of the room off of the Great Hall. "Also Mr Lupin."

"Of course." Harry replied. "They are both still in the same place they were."

"I've been following ze Daily Prophet. Ms. Skeeter's articles were not what I expected zem to be."

Harry looked over at Fleur and smiled and then he turned back to his bond mate's father. "That was entirely your daughter sir."

"We can discuss it soon Papa." Fleur said as both she and Harry looked around to make sure no beetle was in sight. They led the Delacours into Myrtle's bathroom.

"Hi Harry." Myrtle said as she saw the group come in the bathroom. "Good luck tonight."

"Thanks Myrtle. Can I introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. Delacour? They are Fleur and Gabrielle's parents. Sir Ma'am this is Myrtle. She's been a big help this year. She helped Fleur and I during the second task, helped me with my egg and she played a huge part in dealing with Rita Skeeter."

Alain Delacour had been taken slightly aback to be introduced to a ghost, but he was a natural politician and immediately acknowledged the greeting "Zank you for ze 'elp you provided my family Miss Myrtle."

"It's nice to meet you. I liked helping them; they are the only people who treat me well."

"I hope I treat all my friends well." Harry said.

Fleur took the opportunity to hiss the opening command and they watched the wall open. Though she had felt her husband's shock when Gabrielle had done the same thing in front of him, watching her eldest daughter speak what appeared to be parseltongue was still a shock to Apolline Delacour. Harry and Fleur led them down the

stairs and through the passageway and soon they were all in the Chamber of Secrets.

Remus and Sirius were sitting at the table staring at the Marauder's map.

"I don't see any more charms." Remus was saying.

"But it still shows him there, so there's got to be another one." Sirius replied.

"What are you two up to?" Harry asked.

"Still trying to break Moody's confundus." Remus replied looking over at Harry for the first time and noticing the Delacours. He quickly got to his feet and walked over to them "Welcome back sir. I apologize for not noticing you to start with." As he shook hands with Alain, his eyes wandered to the beautiful half-veela by his side. Trying not to stare he fought to get his eyes back to Mr. Delacour. "And this must be your lovely wife?"

"Remus Lupin, my wife Apolline, Apolline my dear I would like you to meet Mr. Remus Lupin."

Apolline held out her hand and Remus accepted it. "Bonjour Madame. Comment ça va?" He asked in greeting.

"I'm fine Mr. Lupin. Thank you."

"And the gentleman who is still staring at you my dearest is Sirius Black."

It was only after Harry walked over and shook his godfather did his eyes return to focus. He looked sheepish at the Delacours before apologizing. "I'm sorry sir..er...uh..nice to meet you Madame."

"A pleasure to meet you as well Mr. Black, at least in 'uman form. I've 'eard many zings of you from my 'usband."

"You know from your godson's bond zat I cannot keep secrets from my wife Mr. Black." Alain said when Sirius looked at him quizzically.

"Of course. I'm still getting use to it I guess." Sirius replied. "Merlin help any lady who gets in my head."

Alain smiled at him then turning back to Remus. "Ze background check on you is complete Remus, outside of some interesting remarks in your school records, everything else is acceptable. You might 'ave to explain any activities you might 'ave participated in when you a member of ze Phoenix Order during ze last war but nothing appeared in a criminal manner. Can you be in my office in Paris a week from tomorrow to conduct ze interview? Zat is if you're still interested in ze position I mentioned to you earlier in ze year."

"Yes sir. I am definitely still interested sir." Moony replied. "As for those remarks in my school records I can only say that I probably deserved a lot more than what is actually there and you know Dumbledore lead the Order of the Phoenix. We had strict orders to what we could and could not do."

"Yes." Mr. Delacour said and was about to say something else but let the subject drop. He then turned to Sirius, "What are your plans for the coming months Mr. Black?"

"I plan on watching Harry and Fleur in the third task tonight and then next week when the school year is over and Harry has left, I thought Buckbeak and I would take off for warmer climates and I'd get some sunshine for a while. If everything goes as planned and the invitation is still offered, I hope then to join you and your family later in the summer. I'm a little tired of this Chamber and Sally over there." He nodded toward the statue of Salazar Slytherin.

"I'm sure you are and course ze invitation is still zere." Alain replied. He turned and looked at his eldest daughter who was holding her bond mate's hand. Letting out a small sigh he turned back to Sirius. "I'm going to do something zat I really shouldn't do, but I feel I must." He reached into a pocket and pulled out a small yellow polished stone and handed it to Sirius. "Zis is an emergency international portkey. My staff 'ave zem when zey travel overseas to insure zey can escape any difficulties zat might arise. Zey are allowed by ze ICW within ze laws of diplomatic immunity. Zey require no wand and no words. You just 'ave to 'old it tightly in your hand for ten seconds to activate it. It will give you an avenue of escape if you need it."

Sirius looked at the small stone in the palm of his hand. "I don't know what to say sir. Thank you doesn't quite cover what I should say. Will you get in trouble for this?"

"It could cause me some difficulties if it were to be found out, but, understand zat as much as I would never want an innocent man to 'ave to go zrough what you are going zrough, I am doing zis mostly for 'Arry's sake. 'E is part of my family now and I will not allow 'im to lose 'is godfather if I can 'elp it."

Sirius nodded at the man in front of him. "That's even better sir. Knowing that if something does happen to me that Harry has a family that will look after him is worth twenty of these stones."

The two men shook hands and then Alain motioned toward the table. "What were you two working on when we came in?"

"We've been trying to remove a confundus charm on this map." Remus saw the look in Mr. Delacour's eyes as he watched the map. "This is something Harry's father, Sirius and I cooked up when we were students here."

"Very impressive." Alain said as his eyes continued to watch the dots in amazement.

"Thank you sir. I'm sure you have heard of Mad-eye Moody? The famous Auror in this country?" At the nod of Mr. Delacour he continued. "He had this map for a while and he seemed to not want to be tracked. We found several layers of confundus charms on it." Lupin pointed at a spot on the map. "Here is his office. It seems he confunded it to always show him in there, no matter where he is. We thought we had just broken through the last charm, but you can still see him there." What Remus, Sirius or anyone else looking at the map at that time failed to notice was another dot with the name Barty Crouch underneath it had appeared when the last charm had been lifted.

"And it bothers your pride zat ze man did something to ze zing you created and you can't figure out what 'e did?"

"A little, but they," Remus nodded to Fleur and Harry, "are planning on using the map tonight and I wanted to make sure there were nothing else effected on it."

"Use it? How?"

"Eet shows ze area where ze maze is Papa." Fleur explained. "Ermione will be watching ze map and can 'elp guide is to where we zink ze cup will be be. We are also concerned zat 'Arry might be in danger tonight. Zis will allow 'er to let us know if someone who doesn't belong in ze maze is zere."

"Danger?" Mr. Delacour asked. "You 'aven't mentioned anything about 'Arry might be in danger in your letters? Is zere something specific?"

"Can I tell 'im?" Fleur asked Harry.

Their eyes looked into each others' for several seconds before he answered. "Of course. But I don't want him to think he needs to do anything else."

Fleur turned back to her father. "Eet seems like 'Arry 'as some kind of connection with Voldemort with 'is scar. Did you read ze article Skeeter wrote where she called 'Arry disturbed?"

"Of course, but with all ze other things 'appening..." Mr. Delacour shrugged at 'Arry as his voice trailed off.

"I understand sir. I mostly ignored it myself."

"Professor Dumbledore zinks zat ze bond 'as been 'elping protect 'arry from ze connection but on zat day 'e was buy Gabrielle 'er birthday gift."

Alain Delacour instantly made the correct logical leap. He looked at Harry. "Ze potion?"

"Dumbledore thinks so sir. It happened while I was under its influence."

Harry had a good idea that the string of French the elder Delacour was uttering was blaming himself for what had happened. "Sir, there was no way for any of us to know that would happen. So please don't blame yourself. I think overall it was for the better since I now know the connection exists."

Mr. Delacour visibly calmed down at the words of the young man. He took a deep breath and asked the original question again. "Why do you think you're in danger?"

"I..I had a dream or something over the summer that Professor Dumbledore thinks was more of a vision of something occurring. It was of Voldemort planning something that involves me sir."

Apolline Delacour wanted to hug the young man, but a look from her daughter and she knew it wasn't something that would be appreciated at that moment. Alain appeared to be thinking very hard on something. Finally he looked up at Harry. "Why do you think the connection to Voldemort is through your scar?"

"It hurts sometimes when he is close to me. The scar itself burns. Even when I had the dream or vision I woke up to the scar hurting."

"As you might imagine I did a lot of research into bonds before accepting my Apolline's. Mostly it was the Veela bond of course, but bonds in general and I never came across anything where a bond or connection can do such a thing through a curse."

"But no one has ever lived through the killing curse before either." Sirius said.

"True." Mr. Delacour agreed and then to Harry. "Do you mind if I have my staff research the topic in general. Not mentioning you or Voldemort?"

"That's fine sir." Harry replied.

Sirius looked at the yellow stone he had put on the table in front of him. "Why don't we let Harry carry this tonight?" He asked.

"NO!" Harry exclaimed. "If you're going to be out there near Fudge, Moody and all of the others you need to be protected Sirius. I can take care of myself."

As Harry and Sirius glared at each other they heard the Chamber doors open. Harry already knew that Hermione and Gabrielle were coming in.

"I'm going to have Fleur helping me Sirius. Nothing is going to happen to me. I need to know you'll be fine out there." Harry said to his godfather. "Besides I think the rules say I can't use any kind of magical transportation. If I have that on me, I might be disqualified if it's found."

"No broom this time?" Sirius asked with a smile. "Guess that would have made it too easy."

"Definitely." Harry replied as he wondered if someone in the past did exactly that and flew over the maze to claim the cup. Presuming a maze had been used as a task in the past. He turned to look at the two ladies who had just entered the Chamber.

"Papa...Maman" Gabrielle rushed over to her parents with Hermione not far behind her.

Apolline gave her youngest daughter a hug and then another hug to Hermione. Gabrielle held up her wrist to show her mother the charm bracelet Harry had given her.

"But eet wasn't my best present." She said mysteriously. "Zough Fleur got ze same present ze next morning."

"And what did 'arry give you zat was so special?" Her mother asked.

Gabrielle looked over at Harry who was smiling at her. "His love. He loves me and he loves Fleur."

Apolline and Alain both turned to look at raven haired boy who blushed under the scrutiny. They suspected it wouldn't take too long to occur, but were still surprised that it had happened after such a short time. Harry continued to surprise them but in ways that only made the young man more and more welcome in their hearts. A warm smile broke over both of their faces. "Zat's wonderful." Mrs. Delacour said. "Ave you decided on when you will announce your bond?"

The bonded quickly held a conversation no one else in the chamber could hear and finally Hermione replied with a smirk. "We think right around Harry's birthday. That particular timing will help a couple of friends of ours."

"In what way would your bond announcement 'elp someone?" Alain asked.

All of the bonded smiled as Hermione explained. "It seems like many people in the school presumed Harry and I would eventually be together and well..."

"There was a pool to the date of when Hermione and I would...uh..become a couple." Harry continued.

"And you're 'elping your friends win ze pool?" Alain asked.

"Zey 'ave been good friends Papa." Fleur said.

"I'm sure zey are ma petite." He took the opportunity to change the subject. "Ms. Skeeter's article on ze attack on Gabrielle? 'Ow did you make zat 'appen? When ze 'eadmaster contacted me, I was prepared for ze worst. I 'ad our personal lawyer ready to file a libel suit again ze Prophet and Ms. Skeeter and several of my staff presenting ways to fight off any legislation zat might be presented against Veela in zis country."

"Eet was 'Ermione." Fleur said quickly. "She figured out a secret of Rita's."

"But it was your idea on how to use the secret." Hermione replied.

"Sir, Hermione did find out a secret of Skeeter's that gave us some control over what she was to print."

"Blackmail?"

"It started that way, but considering the stories she is going to get from us, it's more of an exchange."

"Other stories?"

"Did you see the story about Ludo Bagman? The previous head of Magical Games and Sports?"

"You gave her zat story too?"

"Yes sir. The same friends we are trying to help with the bond announcement lost a significant amount of Galleons from Mr. Bagman at the World Cup when he paid in the Leprechaun Gold. They had been saving their money to help open a Joke shop to compete with Zonko's and they lost their entire savings to him. We also promised her an interview with me and possibly an interview with Sirius. We thought that would work best right after everything starts to break over the summer."

Alain Delacour was thinking of what he had just heard. His daughters and their bond mate had just opened an avenue into the press of this country. He then had another question. "We also expected ze elder Malfoy to retaliate once ze story came out, would you know why 'e didn't?"

"Yes sir. Do you remember the house-elf Dobby? He served our lunch the last time both of you were here."

"Yes of course."

"He used to be Lucius Malfoy's house-elf. I helped Dobby get free of him. Dobby knows a lot of Malfoy's secrets and we let Skeeter talk to him."

"It looks like you have ze making of a fine politician my son." Mr. Delacour said with a smile.

Harry visibly shuddered at the thought then he looked at his bond mates' father. "I'm not sure I would want to do that sir. I really don't know what I want to do yet but earlier this year Professor Moody suggested I might make a good Auror though."

Alain put his hand on Harry's shoulder. "Don't be influenced by ze politicians you 'ave seen 'Arry. I 'ave a question for you. What would you consider more important, catching dark wizards or protecting innocent people?"

"Isn't it the same thing?"

"Not really. Look at your godfather. 'E is innocent, but if 'e were still on ze run ze day you took ze oath and became an Auror, you could be charged and sent to Azkaban for not turning 'im in." Mr. Delacour

explained. "As an Auror, you do not decide who is guilty or who is innocent, your job is to bring in anyone ze courts dictate you must."

"But I'd prefer that than be like Minister Fudge or Percy Weasley."

"Ze young man who was judging ze second task?" When Harry nodded, he continued. "I don't know enough about 'im to make an opinion but I will agree zat Minister Fudge is not ze best man for ze job. Unfortunately 'e 'as a lot of friends in certain circles zat control a lot of money."

"In other words he's been bought?"

"Very astute." Mr. Delacour said. "But you do not 'ave to be like 'im to be a politician. I 'ope your opinion of me is a bit 'igher zan Minister Fudge."

Harry blushed as he realized he had basically insulted the man in front of him. "Sorry sir. You..well you're just so different than Fudge that I just don't think of you as a politician."

"I shall take zat as a compliment. We'll discuss zis further another time. But I should suggest one last zing. Look at ze old Aurors around and ask if zat is who you want to be later in life. Ze ones I know are cold and have lost all ability to love. If you're an auror long enough, you will eventually 'ave to kill someone, you'll see innocent people killed and you'll see much sorrow as you talk to surviving victims." He looked Harry in the eyes and said softly. "My daughters will always love you and I 'ope you always 'ave ze ability to give ze love you 'ave bestowed upon zem. I just ask zat you zink very 'ard before pursuing such a career."

Harry thought of Mad-eye Moody. A man so paranoid, he drinks out of a hip flask instead of trusting anyone. Harry couldn't imagine the man actually loving anyone. "I'll definitely have to see and talk to other older Aurors before going down that path." Harry started thinking of the other path Mr. Delacour had suggested and he started wondering if he could be a politician in the same mold as his bond mates' father. He looked over at Remus and thought of how he looked up to Mr. Delacour. He remembered Fleur's words when they had captured Skeeter. "You will always be Harry Potter." He looked back at Mr. Delacour and smiled. "I will sir and I won't rule out the political possibility either."

"Speaking of careers Harry." Remus said. "Here are the keys to your primary vault from the sale of the Basilisk." He handed four keys to Harry who immediately gave one Hermione, Fleur and Gabrielle.

"May I ask how much it came out to be?" Alain inquired. "You would not hurt my feelings if you say no."

"Deux millions huit cent quarante mille galleons." Fleur said and then realized she had slipped into French. "Two million eight hundred forty thousand galleons. Zat's after paying Moony and his sellers as well as us keeping two gallons of venom, twenty square meters of skins and the longest fang."

"Several fashion houses got into a bidding war for the skin trying to corner the market in that particular fashion. We ended up getting twice the going rate for it." Remus said.

"And Bernardette's 'ouse of Fashion won ze bidding?" Apolline asked with a knowing smile.

"How did you..." Remus asked.

Apolline turned to Fleur and Gabrielle. "Aunt Berdine dears."

Fleur and her mother started speaking rapidly in french until finally Fleur looked at 'arry. "Sorry love. I zought zat mamam might 'ave asked Aunt Berdine to bid for ze skins."

"I wouldn't do zat 'arry." Mrs. Delacour said at once. "But after Alain told me about you getting ze Basilisk and zen several days later Bernadette talking non-stop about a big auction for Basilisk skin coming up and 'ow she must 'ave zem I found it amusing. I didn't tell 'er I knew who was selling zem."

"If we'd known, we could have saved her money and sold them directly to her."

Apolline laughed. "Bernadette zinks she's ze one who made a killing 'Arry. Zree days after ze auction she already had orders for over a quarter of the skin at many times what she paid for it even with ze actual clothes not being available for three years. I'll try to introduce

you to 'er zis summer. Zough you 'ave to be careful or she'll try to convince you to sell 'er line of fashions."

"Arry does need a complete new wardrobe this summer..." Gabrielle said smiling mischievously. "And 'e makes a wonderful model."

"Don't try to deny it Harry. You know you had fun when we picked out your clothes." Hermione said.

"I think it had more to do with the company, than the actual clothes purchasing." Harry smirked.

"Well you're in luck. The same three women will make themselves available again this summer."

"Can we go shopping for knickers for you three as well?" Harry thought.

As he watched the three young ladies blush, Mr. Delacour said, "I doubt I want to know what you just said 'Arry. Maybe we should 'ead back upstairs and walk around a little? It is almost time for lunch."

"And some of us still have a Potions final to take." Hermione said.

"And I 'ave my Charms final today." Gabrielle replied. "Can I 'ave a kiss for good luck 'Arry?"

"Of course." Harry replied and started to give her a small kiss but as their lips touched; Gabrielle reached her arms around his neck and turned the kiss into a more passionate one than Harry would have been comfortable with in front of her parents. Parents or no, he couldn't resist giving Gabrielle the kiss she wanted. When it ended, Harry remembered he was kissing Gabrielle in front of her parents. But when he turned to look at them expecting a more stern expression, they both were wearing a bemused look.

"Uh..sorry...I...well." Harry stammered.

"Nothing to be sorry for 'Arry." Gabrielle's father replied. "You were just doing what our daughter asked from you. I will not play ze angry father."

"Well in that case, the potions final is probably going to be difficult as well. " Hermione said as she still felt the kiss Harry and Gabrielle shared. "Maybe I need a little luck as well."

The rest of the day passed more quickly than Harry would have wanted. The nervous confidence he felt earlier started to turn to only nervousness and he felt the same feelings from Fleur. Every time he looked, the sun seemed to be hastening toward the horizon instead of the slow march it should be making. Finally it was time for the Evening Feast to celebrate the event. Mr. and Mrs. Delacour sat with their daughters and Harry who in turned introduced them to Ginny and the twins.

As the enchanted ceiling darkened to twilight, Professor Dumbledore rose from his chair. The Great Hall immediate fell into silence and he looked around. ""Ladies and gentlemen, in five minutes' time, I will be asking you to make your way down to the Quidditch field for the third and final task of the Triwizard Tournament. Will the champions please follow Professor Hagrid down to the stadium now." He nodded in the direction of the half giant who was rising from his seat at the head table.

Harry kissed Gabrielle and hugged Hermione and Ginny while Fleur hugged her mother and father as well as her sister and Hermione. The entire Gryffindor table erupted in cheers and applause as Harry and Fleur left the table and joined up with Victor and Cedric.

"Al right there Harry?" Hagrid asked and then "And the rest of ya?" When everyone nodded at him, he continued. "Ok then follow me." He led then out of the hall and through the front doors. Harry walked silently beside Fleur still wanting to take her hand in his. Neither of them had anything to say except an occasional "It'll be over soon."

"I'm going to let Sirius and Remus out of the Chamber." Hermione said. "Once I have the map, I'll stay in Myrtle's bathroom. Good luck."

As they walked onto the Quidditch field Harry momentarily stopped. The hedges were now twenty feet high and completely surrounded the field. In the falling darkness the looming hedges made Harry feel uneasy. Hagrid led them to a spot in front of an opening into the hedge. Harry realized that was the entrance into the maze. Soon he

and Fleur would be going in there to face what challenges laid in wait.

Shortly after they arrived the stands started to fill. Voices arose from all around as the students started taking their seats eagerly awaiting the start of the final task. Harry looked over at Fleur and smiled. "I love you."

Fleur's own eyes found his and she replied. "And I love you."

The sky was losing the final light it had left. After months of spending time with Moony, Harry instinctively sought out the moon and found it to be nearly none existent. Then he remembered it was only three days until a new moon. "We won't get any light from the moon in there." He thought to his bond mate. She also looked up and searched the sky.

Harry felt a hand on his shoulder and looked to see Cedric who had a nervous smile on his face. "Ready for this Harry? Fleur?"

"I hope so." Harry replied honestly.

"We'll see Cedric." Fleur answered.

Cedric offer his hand to Harry. "Good luck in there."

"You too."

Fleur gave the older Hogwart's champion a kiss on the cheek. "Good luck Cedric."

"Watch it Fleur, you'll make Cho jealous." Cedric joked.

"Not to mention Bill." Harry added under his breath. But the mention of Cho Chang's name brought up an image of the young lady he had had a crush on earlier in the year. He remembered the feelings he had when she had told him it was Cedric who she was going to the Yule Ball with. The feeling of dislike that had materialized against Cedric. He gave a small laugh at himself for those feeling at that time. He was happy for Cedric now and for Cho. He realized though, he should have been happy for them then.

His thoughts were broken off as Professor's McGonagall, Moody and Flitwick joined them along with Lee Jordan. Harry first was confused by the appearance of the Gryffindor student until he realized that Bagman had been announcing all the tasks and now that he wasn't there, someone had to do the job. Jordan had been announcing the Quidditch matches since Harry's first year so he would definitely be the person for the job.

Professor McGonagall came up to the group of Champions and first turned to Hagrid. She handed him a large red star. "You'll need to wear this Hagrid." Harry noticed that she and the other two professors had similar stars on the back of the hats. As Hagrid was removing his moleskin vest in order to put the star on it, McGonagall addressed the Champions.

"We will be patrolling the outside of the Maze." She explained. If any of you find yourself in trouble and need to be rescued, send up red sparks. Understood?"

The four champions all nodded at her.

"Professor Dumbledore asked me to pass on that though some of the tasks can be difficult, you should stress safety above all else." Harry noticed her eyes lingered on him the most when she was saying that. Again the four champions gave small nods. "Ok then, we'll be off to our patrolling stations. Jordan, it's in your hands now. Remember that we have guest from the ministry and several countries. Please keep the commentary more socially acceptable."

"Yes Professor. It shouldn't be a problem with no Slytherin's involved."

"JORDON!" McGonagall screamed in a whispered voice.

"Yes ma'am. It will be acceptable ma'am."

McGonagall gave one more look at the Champions and then nodding to the other professors she led them away.

As Hagrid walked past Harry he whispered quietly. "Good luck Harry." And each of the four professors went in different directions to position themselves around the maze.

Lee looked over at the Champions, "As commentator I'm not supposed to be biased, so before I start commentating, I'd like to wish you two," He nodded at Cedric and Harry, "good luck in there." With a quick smile, he raised his wand to his throat and said a quiet 'Sonorus.' Instantly his voice filled the stands.

"Students, Professors and guests, welcome to the third task of the Triwizard Tournament. I am Lee Jordan and I will be commentating the task as a last minute replacement for the despicable, low life, thieving..." McGonagall had reversed course and was headed back toward the Champions. Lee caught the movement and quickly completed the sentence. "...Ludo Bagman, who was unable to be here this evening due to professional problems. Hopefully those of you who attend Hogwarts know who I am, but for those honored guest and fellow students and professors from the other schools I will say I do the commentary for the school Quidditch matches. Now on with the task."

"For those who do not know what is to occur, each of the Champions will enter the maze. The first to touch the Triwizard cup will be the Champion. As previously announced the winner will get to keep the Triwizard Cup and will also receive one thousand galleons along with glory for their school." Lee waited a few seconds before continuing. "The Champions will enter the maze based on their current points standing. First to enter the maze will be the two Hogwarts Champions Cedric Diggory and Harry Potter who both have eighty-five points." Lee once again had to pause as deafening cheers erupted around the stadium. Shouts of "DIGGORY!" and "POTTER!" could be heard from the stands. When the noise finally abated Lee continued. "The beautiful Fleur Delacour of the Beauxbatons Academy has eight-three points and will enter the maze after the first two." The blue cloaked Beauxbatons students rose and cheered their champion and through that cheering Harry distinctly heard Ginny and Gabrielle's voices cheering as well. Again Lee waited for the noise to settle before continuing, "and following her will be Victor Krum, seeker extraordinaire of the Bulgarian national team and champion of the Durmstrang Institute. He currently has eighty points."

"Sirius and Remus are headed there now." Hermione's voice came in Harry's head. "I have the map ready to go. Myrtle's going to help me watch as well. Be careful you two."

"Love you Hermione." Harry thought.

"Love you too."

Lee looked over at the Champions. "Are you ready?" The question echoed throughout the stadium. Again the four champions nodded without saying anything. "Then Cedric, Harry...on three then. One...two...three...go."

Harry and Cedric moved quickly into the entrance. As soon as they entered the hedges all sounds of the stadium disappeared. Harry could feel his heartbeat in the silence. The darkness in the hedges was overwhelming. He pulled out his wand and hissed "§Light§" An enhanced brightness spell came off his wand and illuminated an area up to thirty yards ahead of them. Cedric looked at Harry's wand in amazement. He had performed his own lumos spell but the light from his wand was barely visible in Harry's wand light.

"What is that?" Cedric asked.

Harry smiled "Brighter light." It had been in one of Salazar Slytherin's Parseltongue books and one of the few parseltongue spells he had made work. "If I've got to be a parselmouth at least I should get something out of it."

Cedric grinned. "True. Though light alone isn't going to get you that Trophy."

They raced along until about fifty yards into the maze it forked. They two hogwart's students looked at each other. "I'm going this way." Harry said.

"I'll go this way then. Good luck."

"You too." Harry replied and watched Cedric disappear down the path he had chosen. Harry didn't move from his spot.

"I'm coming in now." Fleur said causing Harry to smile. The smile grew even larger when she asked. "Is zat your wand or are you 'appy to see me?" When she caught sight of the light from his wand.

"Very funny love." Harry replied then seeing her coming in the path he continued, "I am very glad to see you though."When she was

beside him, they exchanged a small kiss. "Hermione, we are at a fork. I am standing directly in front of it. Any way better than the other?"

"Not yet. Well maybe the left one. Go a little further."

Harry and Fleur started down the left hand path, while Hermione studied the map. She noticed a something strange. "HARRY! It's Mr. Crouch. He's not dead. He seems to be walking around the maze."

"Is he near one of the four professors who are patrolling the edge? McGonagall, Moody, Flitwick or Hagrid?"

"No..wait...I see McGonagall, Flitwick and Hagrid but Moody is still not showing on the map."

"Gabrielle, can you go look on the south side of the maze and see if you see Mr. Crouch." Harry asked. "Take Ginny with you."

"Ok Harry. Oh and Victor Krum just entered the maze."

Harry and Fleur continued on until they found another fork. A quick query to Hermione and they were headed down the left path. After going a while further, the lack of challenges made Harry more nervous than anything else. He stopped and turned to Fleur. "Shouldn't we have encountered something by now?"

"I would 'ave zought so, maybe zey all wandered out of zese paths or we're going toward a dead end zat doesn't need to be protected."

"You need to go to your right more." Hermione said.

A short distance away they found a right turn and took it, but still there was nothing. No creatures, no spells, not even a garden spider (for those who have read my Champion's tale). It wasn't long before they heard a noise behind them and looking back they saw Cedric come out of a path looking severely shaken. Smoke rose from his robes. "Hagrid's skrewts." He hissed. "They're huge now. Hexes just bounced off of it. I barely got away." Cedric noticed Fleur then and decided not to ask the question. He turned and sprinted down another path.

Harry and Fleur continued along the way they had been traveling. Fleur led the way around another corner and came to a stop. Harry looked past her and saw – himself. Another Harry Potter was standing in front of them, a cold hard look on his face. The other Harry was looking directly at Fleur and was about to say something when Harry realized it was a boggart in front of them and something about him was Fleur's greatest fear. He quickly dashed in front of her and watched the other Harry turn into a Dementor.

When Lupin had suggested the possibility of Boggarts in the maze, Harry already knew what his would turn into. The trick was imagining something that would make it funny. It was Sirius who made the suggestion. Bringing the image up in his mind he leveled his wand "Riddikulus!" he shouted. The Dementor in front of him found itself with three cigarettes between his boney fingers and he was reading an adult magazine. Even Fleur couldn't help but laugh at the image. With a crack the boggart was gone.

"Zank you." Fleur said to her bond mate. "but.."

"I know you could have handled the boggart, but I really didn't want to see myself doing something ridiculous." Harry replied. "If you want, we can talk about it later. There should be nothing about me that you fear."

Fleur smiled and gave Harry a kiss. "Later."

"Hermione, which way?"

"You need to go left some. You're about forty yards from the center."

They found a left turn and took it and with Hermione's guidance the moved closer and closer to the middle. As they turned another corner they found themselves looking at a golden mist. Fleur approached the mist carefully. She tried the revealing charm that Lupin had taught them that he had used on the map and a magenta colored light flared and disappeared.

"It's an inversion illusion spell." She said. "When we go in, it will fill like you are upside down even though your feet are still on the ground. Just continue walking and it will be alright. I'll go first and you follow."

"Fleur..I'll go..." Harry started.

" 'arry I'll be alright."

"Krum is coming up about fifteen yard behind you." Hermione said.

Fleur turned and walked into the gold mist. As she disappeared into this mist, he pulled in her thoughts and felt her feel like she was upside down. She took a step and her world returned to normal. Harry followed into the mist and felt the same upside effect. He was about to take a step when he felt a sharp wave of fear from Fleur that quickly disappeared. He immediately raised his foot to step and he also found his world right again.

"What happened." He asked Fleur.

"Devils snare." She said nodding at some vines withering away from a ball of bluebell light. "I was waiting for you and it grabbed me by the ankles. It startled me."

As they moved away from the mist up the pathway, Harry heard a sound behind them and turned in time to see Krum leveling his wand. He only had a split second to realize the wand was pointed at Fleur. A jet of red light poured out of the Durmstrang's champion's wand and would have hit Fleur if Harry hadn't knocked her to the ground.

"KRUM! What are you doing?" Harry yelled, but Krum's wand was tracking Fleur and Harry knew he was about to send another hex. Harry rolled away and quickly brought his own wand up pointed at Krum. He sent a stunning spell back at Krum but the Bulgarian seeker dodged easily and disappeared back into the gold mist.

Harry sent two additional stunners into the mist hoping for a lucky hit. He then turned back to Fleur. "Are you alright?"

"Oui." She said as she stared at the mist Krum had disappeared into.

Harry helped her to her feet and wrapped his arms around her. "What's got into Krum? Do you think he wants to win that much?"

"I don't know. I thought 'e was..." she let the words dwindle as they both were thinking the same thing.

"Harry, Hermione." Gabrielle said. "We're on ze south side of ze maze and ze man crouch is not 'here. Only Professor Moody is 'ere. He's been pointing his wand and casting some spell."

"Where are you in relations to Moody?" Hermione asked.

"We are about thirty yards away to ze right of 'im."

"That's him." Hermione shouted. "That's where the map says Crouch is."

"We just had Krum attack us in here." Harry said.

"What?"

"Gabrielle, get to Dumbledore. Ask him about Crouch. Hermione go to him as well. He might want to see the map for proof. We are close enough I think." Harry instructed. "I have a bad feeling about this and the faster Dumbledore knows the better."

Harry looked at Fleur. "For some reason Crouch is impersonating Moody or at least that's what the map is showing. Gabrielle and Hermione are going to let Dumbledore know." He grabbed her hand and they started down the path again.

When they made the next turn they were face to whatever with what they didn't want to face. A skrewt. Ten feet long with thick armor coating it surface and an huge stinger hanging over its body.

"Just don't offer it a teddy bear whatever you do." Harry muttered to Fleur. The Skrewt had momentarily stopped when it saw them and now was racing toward them. They did have a plan for the thing – sort of. They hoped it was too large to turn around in the maze. Harry pointed his wand at Fleur with a swish and flick and the right words he levitated her up and over the the skrewt. The skrewt stoppedas it sensed one of its prey was escaping in some way. Harry gently put his bond mate down on the other side of the gigantic beast. As Fleur was about to levitate Harry up and over, the Skrewt did what neither of them could believe, it started to raise its body up the hedge trying to turn around.

"FLEUR!" Harry yelled. "It's underside is visible. "Blasting Hexes right there."

Two different 'Reducto' curses hit the skrewt on the soft underside and a chunk of creature flew off. The part of the skrewt that had tried to move vertical fell back to the ground with an audible 'thunk'. It was dead.

"You're covered in blood or whatever zat zing 'ad in it." Fleur said to Harry when he caught up to her. "Scourgify" she said and Harry's robes were clean.

"Thanks." He said and gave her a kiss. "Had enough excitement yet?"

"Oui. Let's find zat cup and get out of 'ere."

They heard Cedric's voice from off to the side. "Krum, what the hell are you doing?"

Harry looked at Fleur both remembering Krum attacking them. Harry looked both left and right and could not find a path in that direction.

Then they heard Krum's voice. "Crucio!" As Cedric screams started Harry looked again at Fleur with a very determined look. He turned to the hedge where the screams were coming from and making sure he aimed away from Cedric's scream he sent a blasting hex into it. A small hole appeared not large enough to get through so he sent another, by then Fleur had sent a few of her own and the hole was passable and Harry struggled through it. He looked in the direction of Cedric's screams and saw Krum standing over his writhing body with his wand raised and a distant look in his eyes.

"Stupify." Harry yelled and this time the red beam connected with the Durmstrang champion and he collapsed. Harry rushed over to Cedric as Fleur pulled herself through the hole in the hedge.

"Thanks." Gaspd Cedric. He looked over at Krum. "What the hell. He crept up on me and had his wand on me before I could do anything."

"Here let me help you stand." Harry offered and with Fleur's help they pulled the other Hogwart's Champion to his feet. Harry could tell that Cedric's legs were still shaking.

"I...I thought he was alright." Cedric said still looking at Krum.

" 'E attacked us earlier." Fleur said.

"Us? Are you two working together in here?"

"Something like that." Harry replied. "Good thing to. I'm not sure I'd have got through that hedge in time without her."

"I'm not complaining Harry." Cedric said. He nodded over to Krum. "Should we leave him here?"

"No, let's take his wand and send up red sparks." Harry replied.

"Take his wand?"

"If he comes around before they rescue him, I don't want him still able to attack us." Harry said.

"True. Good idea. Though right at the moment I think I would prefer to feed him to the skrewt."

"Can't." Harry replied. "We killed it."

"Good. Hope it was the only one in this damn maze." Cedric said. He walked over and took Krum's wand and put it in his pocket. He then sent up red sparks which hovered over Krum's body. He turned back to Harry and Fleur and said. "Good luck." And he started down the path.

Fleur and Harry worked their way back to through the hedge and continued the way they were going.

"What's going on Harry." Hermione asked. "Red sparks just went up over the maze."

"Krum. He attacked Cedric. Used an unforgivable. I was able to stun him and we sent up the sparks so they can get to him. What about Crouch?"

"Dumbledore is talking....wait..Moody or Crouch or whoever just tried to hex Dumbledore." Hermione replied. "Crouch is unconscious. I have no idea what spell Dumbledore cast but Crouch or Moody

collapsed on the spot. I'm going to see if I can find out anything...but let me see where you are." About ten seconds later she continued. "You're only about 5 yards from the center. It's left of forward to you right now."

"Thanks love." Harry replied. "Go see what Crouch was doing and let Dumbledore know about Krum. He might want to talk to Karkarov." Harry then directed his thoughts to his youngest bond mate. "Gabrielle, can you let Sirius and Remus know we are alright, but that Krum attacked us."

"Of course Harry."

Harry turned to Fleur and pointing in a particular direction. "Five yards that way. If we can't find a way soon, I'm just going to blast my way through. I am not going to let anything happen to you."

It only took them three minutes to find the right pathway. Along the way Hermione told them that Dumbledore was taking Moody to his office.

When they made a turn they were sure would take them directly to the center of the Maze they found themselves confronted by a Sphinx. Harry was mesmerized by sight of a head of a beautiful woman sitting on the body of an enormous lion. The creature was pacing back and forth across the path, blocking the way. She stopped and regarded Harry and Fleur finally she spoke.

"You are very near your goal and the quickest way is through me."

"What must we do to pass?" Fleur asked.

"You must answer my riddle. Answer on your first guess - I let you pass. Answer wrongly - I attack. Remain silent – I will let you walk away from me unscathed."

"What is the riddle?" Fleur asked and then asked all of the bond mates to listen so they could help.

The sphinx sat down upon her hind legs, in the very middle of the path, and recited:

"First think of the person who lives in disguise,

Who deals in secrets and tells naught but lies.
Next, tell me what's always the last thing to mend,
The middle of middle and end of the end?
And finally give me the sound often heard
During the search for a hard-to-find word.
Now string them together, and answer me this,
Which creature would you be unwilling to kiss?"

Working between the four then the answer came rather quickly.

"Spider." Fleur answered confidently.

The Sphinx smiled. She got up and then moved aside. Fleur quickly moved down the path but as Harry attempted to pass the Sphinx moved in front of him. "One riddle per Champion. You may not pass." The creature start pacing again back and forth across the path.

"Fleur wait." Harry thought. "I have to answer my own riddle."

Fleur stopped and looked back to see the Sphinx once again pacing across the path with Harry not being allowed through.

"Ok, give me my riddle." Harry asked the Lion bodied creature. He again asked the bond mates to listen and help.

The Sphinx sat down again in the middle of the path and stared at Harry. "The same conditions apply. Answer my riddle correctly and you shall pass, Answer wrongly and I shall attack, remain silent and you may walk away unharmed."

"I understand." Harry replied as he looked past at Fleur. "If I can't answer this, go on and get the cup."

"Non 'Arry, we will answer it."

Harry looked at the Sphinx and nodded.

"Two parts to follow to make a whole.
First, what does a river do from beginning to end
next What gives Glory, Sorrow, Strife and Death
It starts with the beginning of Winter through the second of Fall
and finally ending with the last of Summer.

Answered correctly you'll find beauty defined.

The bonded immediately started throwing out ideas. "What does a river do?"

"Runs...erodes...flows..." The suggestions kept coming until..

"Let's try the second part and see if it gives us a clue to the first part." Hermione suggested. "What gives all of those things, but lasts for a year."

"I don't zink it's a year. Ze season's are all out of order." Fleur said.

"It's a letter clue like ze middle of your riddle was Fleur." Gabrielle said. "Beginning of Winter.. 'W'"

"Of course.. War. War gives all of zose zings, but what about ze river part?"

Harry was again looking past the Sphinx at Fleur and instantly he knew the answer.

"It's Flower. That's the answer." He said as his eyes continued to look at the young woman ahead of him. "And it is beauty defined." He turned his gaze to the Sphinx and said. "The answer is Flower."

Once again the Lion bodied creature moved aside.

Harry rushed passed her and found himself in Fleur's arms. A not so quick kiss later and they continued on the path. In a fork in the path they bore right at the next fork and there it was. The Triwizard cup sitting on plinth ten yards away.

Harry stopped to admire the cup but Fleur had kept running. It was two more seconds before she stopped and looked back at him.

"Arry?"

"I'm fine." He replied and started walking toward her. "Just adm... FLUER LOOK OUT!" Running along the hedge behind her was an immense eight legged Acromantula. It was on top of Fleur before either of them could react. Pincers were about to close onto her and Harry only reacted with one thought - he HAD to save Fleur.

He slashed his wand as Fleur had shown him and yelled "Lacero!" A red arc left his wand and slammed into the spider knocking it away from his Bond mate. He raced forward with his wand pointed at the spider but it wasn't moving. As he got closer he could see why. The spider was missing a large piece of it's body. The cutting charm had cut a clean slice right through the body of the spider removing a good third of it along with two of it's legs.

Harry knelt beside Fleur."Are you alright?" She was covered in the blood of the Acromantula and was shaking. He put his arms around her and held her. It took a minute for her to regain her composure. "Zank you." She said and kissed him gently. "You saved my life again."

"And you would have saved mine if I'd been the one attacked." He looked over the carcass of the spider. "I don't know what they were thinking." Harry said. "These things can kill you before you can even send up sparks much less be rescued."

Fleur looked over at the spider that had attacked her and seeing the damage she turned and looked at Harry. "How?"

Harry shrugged. "I don't know. I just knew I had to save you."

Fleur wrapped her arms around Harry again. The blood smearing between the two of them. Finally she let go and said. "Let's clean up and get out of 'ere."

"I agree."

After a quick cleaning spell on on their robes they walked hand in hand into the lit clearing where the cup was.

Harry looked at Fleur and noticed how imperfect his perfectly beautiful bond mate was. Sweat ran down her dirt covered face and she had several scratches on her cheek as well from climbing through the hedge to get to Cedric and at that moment she was the most beautiful he had ever seen her "We did it." He said.

Fleur smiled at her bond mate. "Yes we did love."

Harry pulled Fleur to the pedestal the cup was sitting on. "We both take it on three." Harry said, but as he looked at Fleur he saw she was backing away from the cup.

"Non, 'arry. It's yours." Fleur said. "Take eet. I'm 'appy wiz second place."

"No Fleur. We are family. You're my bond mate. This is ours to share."

"Non 'arry I won't. 'usband of mine..." Fleur said causing Harry to look up at her sharply. Fleur breathed in sharply as she realized what she had said. Then releasing the breathe she moved closer to Harry. "I shouldn't 'ave said zat, but we are bonded 'Arry. To me you're my 'usband whether we 'ave exchanged our vows or not. I can't love another nor would I ever want to. I love you 'Arry Potter with every bit of my being."

Tears wetted her eyes now. "Do you remember what I used for my Patronus?"

Harry remembered the image he had seen in her mind that moment in the Chamber. He had seen the two of them standing on a cliff overlooking a beautiful blue body of water that had stretched forever. It was the wedding Fleur imagined for them, she was dressed in a beautiful dress, and he in his dress robes similar to what he had worn at the Yule Ball. The two of them were exchanging their vows. Hermione and Gabrielle were there dressed in their own wedding dresses.

"My happiness is being your family and you being mine, but it's also my greatest fear."

"Your Boggart?"

"If you'd let 'im speak it would be you telling me I'm not worthy to be your wife, to be your family."

Harry pulled her into a hug. "It's me who's not worthy Fleur. I'm not worthy of you, nor Hermione or Gabrielle. I..I am just...how do I say it. I just know that I love you and I will give you that wedding whenever you want it. Then I want to tell you over and over that I love you Fleur. You really are the flower of my heart."

Fleur smiled. "Take your trophy love and let's get out of here."

"But it's our victory Fleur. Take it with me."

"Non, you have given me so much in ze last few months. You've saved my sister's and my life, actually twice for Gabrielle and zree times for me since you agreed to bond with us and now my 'usband you offer me my dreams and banish my fears."

Harry looked back at Fleur, "You've given me as much. You made my life complete, giving me your love. You gave me a life worth living."

Fleur smiled at him. "Zen when we get out of zis maze, we will find a quiet spot and continue zis but for now ze cup is yours 'Arry and I will not take it wiz you. You beat me fairly in ze first task, and saved my life in the second and wizout you I would be dead to zat spider. Zis victory is yours my 'usband. We will share all in ze future but not zis. Zis is for you to win and for me to be proud of my bond mate."

"CLAP,CLAP, CLAP" rang out through the clearing and both Fleur and Harry spun around to see Cedric standing at the entrance to the clearing. His robes were torn in several spots, he was favoring his left leg and he had blood coming out of a wound on his forehead.

"Husband? Love? Bondmate? I thought you were dating Fleur's sister Harry?" Cedric said. "I can't wait to hear this fascinating tale. As much as I was tempted to take the cup while you two were having your spousal argument I couldn't do it. Now Harry, do as your wife is telling you and take the cup and let's get out of here before another of Hagrid's pets show up."

Harry looked at Cedric and then back at Fleur who was had moved away again. "Take it 'Arry."

Harry looked one last time at the determined smile that graced his bond mate's face then he turned and grabbed the cup right as he heard Hermione scream "HARRY WAIT! Dumbledore.." but it was too late he felt the jerk behind his navel as the port key whisked him away. Cedric turned to Fleur and asked, "Did you know the cup was a portkey?"

"Non!" She replied and a look of concern passed over her eyes as her bond went silent as Harry was in portkey transient. She tried to communicate with Hermione or Gabrielle but knew without Harry responding she couldn't talk to either of her sisters. It was only a few seconds before Harry made it to where ever he was going, but to Fleur it seemed like hours.

A/N: I don't really consider this a cliffhanger. I think everyone knows where Harry will end up.

The first part of this chapter was written little pieces at a time, so I think it came out a little disjointed. But the third task I like.

Gabrielle was in the stands sitting with her parents, Ginny and Luna. She was nervous. Her bond mate and sister were both in the maze now. It had only been a couple of minutes since they had all stood and cheered as her older sister disappeared into the thick hedges Harry had disappeared into a few minutes previously. Fueling her nervousness was the fact she could feel and see what it was like between the hedges. The darkness that Harry's wand light cut through had seemed impenetrable. She knew she would be frightened to go in there herself. Gabrielle felt a sense of relief when her sister met up with Harry. She was confident that the two of them could face any dangers. It was shortly after the two met up that her bond mate asked her to do something.

"Gabrielle, can you go look on the south side of the maze and see if you see Mr. Crouch." Harry asked. "Take Ginny with you."

Gabrielle didn't know why she was to look for Mr. Crouch but quickly surmised that Hermione must have seen him on the map. She quickly replied to her bond mate. "Ok 'arry. Oh and Victor Krum just entered ze maze." This last was because of the cheering that had erupted from the Durmstrang students since she had not heard what the commentator had said.

Gabrielle leaned over to Ginny and whispered. "Arry needs us to do somezing. Come wiz me."

"Harry? How...oh." asked Ginny before she remembered that Harry and Gabrielle could talk to each other in their minds. She turned to Luna who wasn't watching the maze but was watching the stars in a dreamy fashion. "We'll be back soon. Gabrielle needs me to go with her."

"Ok. Do you want me to come too?"

Ginny was about to invite the blond witch then remembered that Gabrielle would be 'talking' to Harry and it would be hard to explain to Luna. "No it'll be fine. You keep watching and let us know if anything happens while we're gone."

Luna smiled at her friend. "Ok." She then turned her eyes back toward the sky.

Gabrielle quickly explained to her parents that she needed to go do something for Harry and she and Ginny quickly descended the stands. Unfortunately they were on the north side and had to work their way completely around the stadium.

As they were walking around Gabrielle stopped short as her eyes became unfocused. After a few seconds her eyes refocused and she giggled. She quickly explained to her friend. "Zey encountered a boggart. 'Arry made it look silly." They continued the long trek around the stadium as Gabrielle tried to keep abreast of what her bond mate and sister were doing.

"Oh...zat was interesting." Gabrielle said again when she stopped. "Ze world was upside down in some kind of golden mist and my sister was startled by Devil's Snare."

"You really can experience what Harry is experiencing?" Ginny asked as they started walking again.

"Oui." Gabrielle replied. "I can even look zrough 'is eyes if I want. Zat can be very fun, especially when 'e just gets out of ze shower and looks in a mirror."

"EEK!" Ginny stopped and pulled Gabrielle to stop as well. With her eyes as wide as they could go she asked. "You haven't. You wouldn't."

"I have but so 'as 'e."

"He peeks at you when you're...you're...."

"Naked? Oui, it took a while for 'im to do it. 'E was so noble, but..."

"You wanted him to?" Ginny asked in disbelief. "You..but...why?"

The two of them had started walking again as Gabrielle explained. "First ze people of my country are a little...euh...more relaxed about nudity and sex zan zis country. Besides zere are no secrets in ze bond. "

"Yeah, I understand the no secrets, but what does that have to do with..with you and he seeing..."

"When you got out of ze shower zis morning did you look in ze mirror?"

"Well yes, of course I did?"

"You saw yourself naked?"

"Of course but..."

"Can you visualize zat right now in your mind? Yourself naked?"

"Yeah but..."

"Zen if you were in ze bond, your bond mate could see eet." Gabrielle saw they were close to their goal now and brought the conversation to a close. "If 'Arry were to see zose zoughts and not been told it was fine for 'im to see it, 'e would feel guilty and it would cause problems."

As they rounded the stands on the south side Gabrielle explained what Harry wanted them to do. They slowed down and inched their way closer to the maze keeping themselves in the shadows as much as they could. Finally they were close enough to see the south side of the maze and looking toward the towering hedges they saw....Moody. He had his wand out and it appeared he was casting a spell. Gabrielle was about to tell Harry, but then she felt the surprise and then anger as Krum tried to attack her sister. When Gabrielle felt Harry's emotions calm down she said. "Harry, Hermione." Gabrielle said. "We're on ze south side of ze maze and ze man Crouch is not 'ere. Only Professor Moody is 'ere. 'E's been pointing 'is wand and casting some spell."

"Where are you in relation to Moody?" Hermione asked.

"We are about zirty meters away to ze right of 'im."

"That's him." Hermione exclaimed as she saw the dots of Ginny and Gabrielle in relation to Moody. "That's where the map says Crouch is."

"We just had Krum attack us in here." Harry said.

"What?" Hermione exclaimed.

"Gabrielle, get to Dumbledore. Ask him about Crouch. Hermione go to him as well. He might want to see the map for proof. We are close enough I think." Harry instructed. "I have a bad feeling about this and the faster Dumbledore knows the better."

"Come Ginny." Gabrielle said to her red haired friend. "Harry wants us to tell Dumbledore about this. It seems that man is not Professor Moody."

"How..how do you know?"

"No time to explain right now. We need to see the headmaster." Gabrielle replied. "Hermione will be joining us. You'll probably find out soon."

The two young witches stayed in the shadows as they backed away. As soon as they rounded a corner, they started running. It wasn't long before they made it to the judges table.

"Pro...Professor Dumbledore." Gabrielle gasped. "We...need to....talk to...you." She continued to gasp.

"We are busy here young..GINNY?" Percy Weasley said in a dismissive tone as he looked over at them. "What are you doing here? Go back to your seat. Mum is up there." He pointed in the stands over his left shoulder.

"We..we have to...talk to you Professor." Gabrielle gasped again to the Headmaster.

Hermione raced up to Gabrielle and Ginny at that moment. The map folded but clutched in her hand. "Professor Dumbledore sir." She said.

"What is the meaning of this Dumbledore." Karkarov asked suspiciously. "Is this some kind of trick to distract us? Why are all of these students here?"

Dumbledore eyed the three witches and knew that it was something to do with Harry. Had something happened in the maze he wondered. "You three keep watch and I'll see what these young ladies need." he said to the other judges.

He got up from his chair and led them away from the table not caring about the look of annoyance on Percy's face. After they had walked several steps he asked. "I presume this has something to do with Harry? Something happened in the maze?"

"Actually sir," Hermione began, "We think Mr. Crouch is impersonating Moody."

"And when we were just zere, we saw Moody casting spells."

Professor Dumbledore looked at Hermione and then over to Ginny who appeared lost in the conversation and to Gabrielle. "What makes you think this?" He asked calmly but a chill had descended into his aged body.

"The map sir." Hermione said. She glanced around to make sure they were alone and then unfolded the map. She hadn't cleared it, so all the dots were still moving around.

"Ah, this must be the Marauder's map." The Headmaster said, taking the parchment from her. "Impressive." He murmured to himself. "How did they.."

"Look sir." Hermione was pointing at the dot on the south side of the Quidditch pitch that had Bartemius Crouch under it.

"We were just zere sir." Gabrielle said. "Where zat dot is we saw Professor Moody."

Dumbledore looked over to a group of dots and saw his name along with Gabrielle Delacour, Ginevra Weasley, and Hermione Granger.

"Oh, Professor 'Arry said to tell you that Krum attacked zem in ze maze."

Many thoughts raced through the brilliant mind of the Headmaster. Thoughts that he had seen in his Pensieve, of Voldemort's plan for Harry and the words of the young witch who had just told him "We saw Moody casting spells."

"When you saw Alastor..I mean Professor Moody casting spells was it the same time Krum was attacking Harry and Fleur?"

"Oui." Gabrielle replied. "Zat exact moment."

Dumbledore brushed past the girls pushing the map back into Hermione's hands as he did. Then moving much quicker than anyone over one hundred years old should ever move, he rushed toward the south side of the maze. His wand already out in his hand. "You may follow, but do not get too close." He said over his shoulder as he rushed on.

Ginny, Gabrielle and Hermione all followed the old wizard keeping some distance behind him. Gabrielle and Hermione both felt the intensity of the emotions of Harry as he and Fleur battled the Skrewt, but both of them were watching the Headmaster more. Past Dumbledore they could see Crouch moving his wand again while at the same time they felt Harry's anger and determination. They were both concentrating on Dumbledore; neither witnessed Harry's fight with Krum in the maze.

Suddenly as Dumbledore reached Crouch the sky filled with red light breaking their concentration. Hermione looked up to see sparks flying out of the maze. A gasp rose from the crowd as they all looked up into the red lights wondering who was no longer in the tournament.

"What's going on Harry?" Hermione asked. "Red sparks just went up over the maze."

"Krum. He attacked Cedric. Used an unforgivable. I was able to stun him and we sent up the sparks so they can get to him. What about Crouch?"

"Dumbledore is talking....wait..Moody or Crouch or whoever just tried to hex Dumbledore." Hermione replied. "Crouch is unconscious. I have no idea what spell Dumbledore cast but Crouch or Moody collapsed on the spot. I'm going to see if I can find out anything...but let me see where you are." Hermione opened the map and studied it and about ten seconds later she continued. "You're only about 5 yards from the center. It's left of forward to you right now."

"Thanks love." Harry replied. "Go see what Crouch was doing and let Dumbledore know about Krum. He might want to talk to Karkarov." Harry then directed his thoughts to his youngest bond

mate. "Gabrielle, can you let Sirius and Remus know we are all right, but that Krum attacked us."

Hermione rushed to Dumbledore while Gabrielle and Ginny started looking for Lupin and Sirius. Neither had a clue where the two of them were.

"Sir." Hermione said and she rushed to Dumbledore's side. "Sir." She repeated again and then looking around to make sure no one was listening she continued. "Krum."

Dumbledore's eyes looked up at the Red Sparks lingering over the stadium. "Is Harry ok?"

"Yes sir. He stunned Krum when he attacked Cedric. Harry said Krum used an unforgivable on Cedric. The sparks are over Victor."

"Is Mr. Diggory injured?"

"No sir. I don't believe he is. Harry didn't say otherwise."

Dumbledore sighed in relief. "Was this the plan?" He wondered. "Have Krum kill Harry and the other Champions in the maze. It would have prevented any support from European countries when Voldemort returns. But why Harry?" Dumbledore asked himself, but then a possible answer arose. "Maybe he was going to make it look like Harry killed all the other Champions." Realizing that the young Witch was staring at him he brought his thoughts back to what needed to be done. He lifted his wand and a silver phoenix came out of it. Dumbledore spoke to the Patronus. "Minerva, Victor Krum is under the sparks. Please get to him and take him somewhere he can't talk to anyone. Have Poppy check him for the Imperius curse." The silver phoenix dashed off to find who the message was for, in this case Professor McGonagall.

Dumbledore looked upward at the stands. The sparks had distracted everyone so no one had noticed the exchange between Moody and himself but he knew he didn't have much time. He knelt beside the unconscious man and pulled his flask loose from his belt. Unscrewing the cap he poured a little out and then sniffed the contents. "Definitely Polyjuice potion." He touched his wand to the unconscious form of what appeared to be Alastor Moody and a disillusionment charm made him nearly invisible. "I think we need to

take him to my office. Miss Granger please stay with me. I want to know if anything else is amiss in the maze." He levitated the body and started moving quickly toward the castle.

"Yes sir." Hermione replied and started walking at the side of the Headmaster. She let Harry know that's where they were going. She helped solve Fleur's riddle as they ascended the steps to the second floor while Harry's riddle was solved as they passed the Gargoyle and entered the revolving staircase. She almost fell down the steps when she felt the rush of energy, desperation and love that poured out of Harry when he saved Fleur.

Dumbledore steadied the young bright witch and gave her a quizzical look.

"Fleur...Harry.." she gasped and then explained. "Fleur was attacked by an Acromantula. Harry..well Harry saved her." She followed the Headmaster into his office. "They are at the cup now.'

"Well it won't be long now." Dumbledore said. "The cup is a portkey and as soon as they touch it, it will bring them outside the maze." He removed the disillusionment charm from Moody and guided him onto the floor. "Now we'll have to wait and see who this is. I can't question him until I know that."

"The map says its Crouch sir." Hermione said.

"Yes, but which one is the question." Professor Dumbledore said quietly. A few seconds later he looked at Hermione. "Is it finished yet?"

"No sir. They are having a disagreement sir. Fleur is refusing the take the cup with Harry."

"And he's refusing to take it without her?"

"Yes sir."

The Headmaster made a motion with his wand and the impostor's body became rigid. "I can't bind him. If this person is larger than Moody, the bindings might kill him, and if he's smaller, they would be too loose to hold him." He walked over and sat at his desk. "All we can do is wait. As much as I want to go get Harry and the other

Champions out of the maze, the magical contract requires either they give up or someone becomes a winner by touching the cup." Dumbledore continued to stare at the man on the floor. He kept thinking of Krum attacking Cedric and...and another possible explanation crossed his mind. "Do you know if Krum attacked just Miss Delacour or both Harry and her?"

"I don't sir. I was busy watching the map." Not wanting to bother Harry or Fleur she quickly queried Gabrielle and found out that Krum did only try to curse Fleur and not Harry. When Hermione relayed this information to Dumbledore, a grave expression came over his face.

A silver cat appeared and started to speak to Dumbledore. "Poppy says Krum definitely has all the signs of being under the Imperius Curse. She will keep him unconscious until you say otherwise."

"So it is possible he was trying to kill the other champions and make it look like Harry did it or was it something else something that might still be going on? Could he have been trying to make sure Harry won the tournament? If so why?" Dumbledore pondered the question. "If the clearing was to be a trap Harry would have already set it off. The only thing left for him to do is get the...." It felt like his entire office had dropped thirty degrees as a cold chill descended over the Headmaster's entire body He suddenly remember it was Moody who placed the cup in the maze. "Miss Granger. Please tell Harry to not touch the cup." He said to the young witch with him.

A stunned Hermione spent a couple of seconds trying to figure out what the Headmaster had just said and why he would ask it. Then she realized Harry was just about to do just that. "HARRY WAIT! Dumbledore said to not..." She stopped as she realized she was too late. Harry had touched the Cup and she felt the bond go silent. She looked at the Headmaster as a wave of fear passed in her eyes. "He touched the cup sir, he's gone."

"Can you ask Miss Gabrielle if she can see the Judge's table?"

"I..I can't. not until Harry is.." but in a few seconds her eyes lit up. "He's alive and somewhere. HARRY!"

Hermione looked at the Headmaster "He's all right sir but he's...."

%%%%%%%%%

Harry's feet slammed onto the ground and as he stumbled to a stop his glasses flew off his face.

Three distinct voices came through the bonds he shared but between the mental shouting of his name and questions from all of them, he couldn't think straight. "Quiet please." He mentally requested. "I don't know where I am, give me a minute. I lost my glasses."

Harry spent a minute scrambling around looking for his glasses in the darkness. He let out a sigh of relief when his fingers finally wrapped around them. Quickly he slid them into place and his surroundings came into focus.

"I'm nowhere near the castle. No mountains anywhere." Harry started to his bond mates. He looked around and found himself in a dark overgrown graveyard. "I'm in...wait hold on. There's someone coming."

"Harry, Dumbledore says to be careful."

Harry pulled out his wand and yelled to the person. "Who's there?"

The figure was steadily getting closer as he passed headstone after headstone. It appeared the person was coming directly toward Harry. Harry blinked trying to make out the man. He could tell the man was small and carrying some kind of bundle in his arms. The hood on the cloak the man wore covered his face in its darkened depth.

Again Harry shouted. "Who are you? Where am I?"

The person continued walking toward him as if he didn't hear Harry's yell. Closer and closer he came.

"Harry, get out of there." Hermione said. "This is not part of the Tournament. Dumbledore thinks Crouch changed the portkey location on the cup. It was supposed to take you out of the maze to the Judges table."

The other person had stopped beside a tombstone that stretched six foot high.

"Arry, what's going on? Where are you?"

"I...I don't know but someone's here." Harry replied. A knot developed in his stomach as he started to become nervous. His fingers wrapped around his wand a little tighter. His eyes moved around looking for anything else amiss.

"Harry, Dumbledore thinks..."Hermione started, but as Harry continued to stare at the man and his bundle a high cold voice said only "Prepare him." The voice seemed to come from the bundle the man was setting down next to a tombstone.

As the shorter man stood back up his hood slipped from his head and Harry came face to face with his parent's betrayer, Peter Pettigrew.

"You!" Harry gasped. His wand was up in an instant. "Expelliarmus!" He yelled.

Wormtail's shield was up only just in time.

"Diffindo!" Harry followed up with but at the same time started backing away from Wormtail. This time Pettigrew missed blocking the hex and it ripped into Peter's thigh drawing blood, almost taking him to the ground.

"Fool!" The high pitched voice said again. "He is but a boy. Can you not do anything? Do not fail me Wormtail or you will suffer."

Harry kept his full attention on the wand in his father's old friend's hand as he continued to move away. An image from the vision he had in the summer came to mind. One where the same high pitched voice casts the killing curse upon an old muggle. He still didn't know exactly what it looked like, but he knew in that bundle was Voldemort.

The thought left Harry stunned and he almost missed the wand movement and "Incarcerous!" from Wormtail. Harry dove out of the way just as thick ropes skimmed past him. The leap took its toll as his left arm slammed into an old worn tombstone. He rolled over and glanced down at his arm, the pain coursing through his body already suggested it, but the odd angle the arm hung at confirmed that it

was broken. Harry gritted his teeth and pushed the pain away. As he tried to scramble to his feet, the name on the old tombstone caught his eye. Though the first name was old, faded and unreadable, a familiar last name glared back at him 'RIDDLE'. Harry looked at another tombstone and then another; several had the same name.

Harry's arm brushed over the tombstone as he finally regained his feet and another wave of pain washed over him almost sending him back to his knees. Again he pushed the pain to the back of his mind and looked up. Through the darkness he could see Pettigrew was advancing on him again, but this time he was limping cautiously. Harry started backing away, looking around for something, anything that could help him. Not finding anything he brought his wand up again and was going to send another cutting curse at Wormtail when something large and long slithered behind one of his feet tripping him. Surprised, Harry was unable to do anything about the red light that hit him on his way to the ground.

In Dumbledore's office, Hermione was describing what had been happening with Harry. "It was Pettigrew sir. Harry was fighting him but he tripped and....and now Harry's stunned. He thinks he's there sir, He-who..I mean Voldemort. Harry thinks Voldemort is there with him."

"Ok, tell me everything wait...show it to me so I can see every detail. Maybe I can figure out where he is." Dumbledore said and rose from his desk. "We can use the pensieve."

"I...I was only listening to his thoughts sir. I didn't try to get an image." Hermione replied guiltily. She immediately started blaming herself. She thought of the hesitation he had before telling Harry not to touch the cup. "If I'd just not hesitated. If I'd just repeated Dumbledore immediately and now...and now I didn't try to see where he was. Harry, where are you?" Her final words were a plea that she knew wouldn't be answered, not until her bond mate woke up. Then an idea crossed her mind. "Sir Maybe Fleur or Gabrielle....but with Harry being unconscious..."

"I understand Miss Granger." Professor Dumbledore said. He turned to the red and gold phoenix sitting on the perch listening to everything said. "Fawkes, can you go retrieve both of the Delacours sisters? One is in the maze and the other I'm not sure but will be near the pitch." With a small bob of his head the Phoenix took flight

and then was gone in a flash of fire. Dumbledore made a quick motion with his wand and the silver phoenix patronus was back again. "Minerva, Filius, please retrieve Mr. Diggory from the Maze. The tournament is over but we have problems. Do NOT let anyone see him yet." A flick of his wand and it too was off.

In the center of the maze two Champions looked at each other. They had just watched Harry Potter disappear with a Portkey. After asking Fleur if she knew the cup was a portkey, Cedric looked around. "How do you suppose we get out of here?" He asked.

Fleur didn't answer the question. She seemed to be focused on something unseen. Cedric could see concern in her eyes and presuming he knew what it meant so he tried again. "I'm sure Harry is fine. The cup was probably a fast way out of the maze."

"Non." Fleur finally replied. "E...e is not 'ere anymore. Not at 'ogwarts."

"Sure he is. Like I said the Portkey probably took him out of the maze and he's getting ready to collect his thousand Galleons."

"Non." Fleur repeated as she looked at Cedric. "You do not understand, I know 'Arry isn't 'ere. But 'Ermione is wiz Dumbledore and 'e knows now."

"How can you know that?" Cedric asked. "I didn't think you were into divination or anything like that."

Fleur was back concentrating and didn't answer him for a minute. "Someone's coming."

Cedric looked around the clearing. "It's about time someone came for us, but how do you know."

"Non, someone's coming for 'Arry."

"Fleur what the hell is going on? How do you know what's happening with Harry?"

"You 'eard most of eet Cedric. 'Arry is my bond mate."

"So you're married or something? I thought he was dating your sister?"

"I don't 'ave time to explain, but eet is a secret." Fleur said. "Please Cedric, don't tell anyone about it. But for now just trust me...It's the animagus...it's Wormtail!"

Cedric whirled around again looking around the clearing and still saw nothing. "You're starting to worry me Fleur. Do you need Madam Pomfrey? I can send up red sparks."

"Cedric, 'arry is my bondmate. Veela Bond mates can 'ear each other 'ere." She pointed to her head. "I can 'ear 'im in my mind. Right now 'e is dueling someone wherever zat cup took 'im." Her eyes focused on Cedric's. "I should 'ave taken ze cup wiz 'im. I could be zere 'elping 'im right now."

"Harry can take care of himself. He's proven that enough times."

"You don't understand. 'e zinks Voldemort is zere."

Cedric mentally cringed at the name but it did not reflect in his demeanor. "Harry is fighting You-Know-Who?"

"Oui, or at least 'is servant."

Cedric didn't know what to think but he was put into Hufflepuff for a good reason. "Ok Fleur, what can I do to help?" He asked.

Fleur grimaced as she felt Harry's pain as his arm broke. She looked at Cedric, "E's hurt." She looked around the clearing. "I've got to get out of 'ere. 'Arry needs me. 'E's been stunned. I 'ave to get to Dumbledore and find out what I can do."

"How are we supposed to get out of here? Guess no one thought of second through fourth place finishers."

"I'm going back ze way I came." She started to walk toward the opening that led back into the maze. Cedric reached out and grabbed her arm. "Are you sure you want to do that? What if they're more skrewts or Acromantulas?"

"Want to? Of course not, but I 'ave to Cedric. I.." the rest was cut off as a flash of flame had both of them reaching for their wands but Fleur immediately recognized Fawkes. When the majestic bird hovered in front of her, she knew he was there to take her to Dumbledore as well.

"That's Dumbledore's phoenix." Cedric sputtered.

"Yes and 'e is 'ere for me. I'll make sure someone comes for you soon. Zanks Cedric and please don't tell anyone."

Cedric smiled as best he could. "Go help Harry."

Fleur nodded then grabbed a tail feather and was gone.

As Hermione watched Fawkes disappear a question appeared on her lips. "Sir. Why can't we just tell Fawkes to go get Harry?"

"First Fawkes would not know where to go, but even if he did, if Voldemort were to see Fawkes, I am positive he would kill Harry before a rescue could happen." Dumbledore said. He spent a few seconds considering his words and decided a further explanation was in order.

"There is a reason Voldemort wants Harry dead, but it isn't..."

Before he could finish the explanation Fawkes was back with Fleur. As soon as she was safely on the floor, Fawkes disappeared again.

"Ermione? What's going on? Eet was zat Animagus. 'Arry?" Fleur's questions were jumbled together, but Hermione knew exactly what she was saying.

"We are trying to determine that exact thing Miss Delacour. Since your sister will be here, may I address you as Fleur and Gabrielle?"

"Of course 'eadmaster."

"Did you.." Before Dumbledore could finish the sentence Fawkes had again returned not only with Gabrielle but with Ginny as well.

"Thank you Fawkes." Dumbledore said then he addressed the two young Delacours. "Did either of.." But again he was interrupted

when a silver cat Patronus appeared. "Everyone saw Fawkes take Gabrielle and Ginny. There is an uproar down here. Lupin and the Delacours are headed to your office. What's going on Albus?"

Dumbledore sighed as he turned away from the cat and looked at the Delacour sisters and for the third time tried to ask the question he needed an answer to. "Did either of you get an image of where Harry is? Hermione was only listening to his thoughts."

"Oui." Fleur replied. "Zough some of ze time I was talking to Cedric. 'Arry is in a graveyard somewhere, but 'e doesn't know where."

"Eadmaster, a lot of ze 'eadstones have ze name Riddle on zem." Gabrielle chimed in.

Dumbledore's blue eyes alit with hope as he realized he didn't need the pensieve to know where Harry was. "Little Hangleton." He said quietly. He knew the area well. In his constant studying of Tom Marvolo Riddle, Dumbledore had discovered who his father had been and the village where he was from. Dumbledore had even visited Riddle House when he'd heard of the death of Frank Bryce. The trails through the dust of the old manor suggested a snake had slithered over its floors but by the time Dumbledore had arrived, there had been no sign of Voldemort. He remembered the graveyard by the small church where the Riddle family had been buried for generations. He turned to the four witches in front of him and said. "I think I know where he is, but we need to hurry."

He was about to stand when his door burst open and Remus, Sirius in his animagus form, Alain and Apolline Delacour came rushing into the room. The entire room started filling with questions.

"SILENCE!" Dumbledore said with a commanding voice. He looked at the people in the room before continuing. "Harry has been taken by Voldemort and we are trying to find a way to get to him."

"Ees zere anyzing I can do to 'elp Albus?" Alain asked.

"Thank you but I think not at this moment."

Several people now noticed Moody unconscious on the floor. "Moody?"

"That's not Moody." Hermione replied, as her eyes caught Lupin's, another thought occurred to her. She pulled back out the map and looked at Moody's office. It still showed Alastor Moody in there.

"Sir." She said to Professor Dumbledore. "I think the real Moody might be in his office."

"Unfortunately we do not have time for that right now." Dumbledore replied. "We..."

"Eadmaster, 'Arry's awake." Fleur said and every person in the office turned in her direction.

Harry had a headache. That is the one thing he knew for certain as he regained consciousness. That and his arm felt like it was on fire due to the pain running through it. A strange taste was in his mouth. He quickly realized the taste was from some kind of cloth that had been shoved into his mouth. Again his mind flooded with his bond mate's worries and questions for him.

"We are..."

"Dumbledor...."

Bits and pieces of each of their thoughts to him were scattered amongst the others. A word here and there, it was similar to the day they had first bonded and through it all his headache was getting worse.

"Ladies. Please!" He mentally shouted through the pain in his head and as the questions quieted down, Harry's brain came back to life. He started remembering what had happened and who and where. His eyes flew open only to be staring into the eyes of Wormtail who was putting his wand away.

"My master wants you awake for this." Pettigrew said.

Through his gag Harry yelled at Wormtail and struggled to get to his parent's betrayer. Pain shot through his left arm as Harry realized he was bound to a tombstone by the same type of cords that he had barely dodged before. Through the fog that was still his headache and pain in his arm a single French voice filled his head. "We are

wiz you love. We are also with Dumbledore. 'E knows where you are."

"DUMBLEDORE! Harry thought. Just the name brought a sense of relief, a sense of knowing everything would be all right. "He knows, he'll think of something." Harry immediately started looking around as if expecting the Headmaster to appear any minute.

Wormtail had pushed a giant stone cauldron to the foot of the grave and was bending over doing something at its bottom. With a woosh, a flame erupted underneath it.

Voldemort was an expert at reading people, not just as an expert at Legilimency, he had always been able to sense the mood of people just by their faces. He had been watching Potter through the opening in the Robes he was currently in and noticed what seemed like relief flow over the boy. He couldn't have that, he wanted Potter afraid, cowering in front of him and his death eaters so he could show his followers the stories behind the boy were all false.

"Wormtail." Voldemort called to his servant. "Ungag the boy."

"Yes Master." Wormtail scurried over and pulled the cloth from Harry's mouth.

"Now Potter." The high pitched voice asked. "Do you know what is going to happen to you tonight?"

Harry glared at the robes. He couldn't make out anything yet, but knew that's where the voice was coming from. He decided not to say anything at the moment.

"You are going to die, but only after..."

"DUMBLEDORE WILL.." Harry shouted over the soft almost whispering voice of Voldemort but was cut off by Voldemort himself raising his own voice.

"DUMBLEDORE can do nothing." He said. "He has no idea where you are and even if he did, you will be dead as soon as he comes near this place. Those ropes around you are magical Potter. A single thought and they will squeeze the very life out of your body. If your esteemed," That word was almost spat out in

disgust,"Headmaster or that Phoenix of his does show up, you will die earlier than planned. Yes I heard of your adventure the year after we last met. I heard from my servant at Hogwarts how Dumbledore's bird saved you. You are nothing without another's protection and tonight I will prove it. Tonight there will be no Dumbledore, no Phoenix and there will be no miracles for Harry Potter."

Harry's confidence diminished with those words but he refused to allow Voldemort the satisfaction of knowing it. "Then kill me already."

"All in good time Potter but first there is much to be done. Is it ready Wormtail."

Harry's attention returned to the large Cauldron. The liquid inside it was bubbling and spitting out sparks.

"Very soon master."

In the Headmaster's office Dumbledore was listening to what the bond mates of Harry were telling him. Finally he said, "We don't have much time. Sometime tonight Voldemort plans to kill Harry."

"Then let's go get him." Remus said. "We have several people here and.." He was cut off when padfoot became Sirius causing Ginny's mouth to drop. "count me in. He's my godson Albus, you'll not leave me behind."

"You heard what Voldemort told Harry." Dumbledore said to the Marauders. "I cannot go and we cannot attack in force. He will kill Harry as soon as we try. He has been working on this plan for a year Remus, so do not underestimate him."

"I'll go alone then." Remus growled. "A single person should be able to get close and maybe get Harry out of there."

"Like hell you will." Sirius replied, "I'll be the one going. Just tell me where he is."

"One person might be able to get to Harry." Dumbledore admitted calmly. "But it will be neither of you. I wouldn't risk Wormtail being able to sense either of you." His eyes leveled on a silvery blond

haired young lady. "No, in this case, I think Fleur would be the best choice."

Another round of commotion broke out.

"Zis is madness. You cannot send my daughter against zat madman, I'll go." Alain Delacour insisted.

"Alain, she is the best trained person who can talk to Harry and let us know what is going on as well." Dumbledore argued. "I don't know what Voldemort is planning but I can assure you it is not good for Harry. We are running out of time. If Voldemort detects a threat I am sure he will kill Harry and make his escape.

"Wormtail just told Voldemort whatever ees in ze cauldron is ready." Fleur said to Dumbledore and then to her father. "Of course I will go Papa. 'Arry needs me. You know 'e saved my life again in ze maze? I cannot nor will not turn my back on my bond mate. Besides you know what will probably 'appen if 'e dies." She held her father's gaze for several seconds before he finally nodded.

"I'll go with her." Hermione said nervously. "I..I can help."

"J'irai également." Gabrielle replied, then translated her own words. "I will also go."

"I appreciate your desire, both of you." Dumbledore said to Hermione and Gabrielle, "but I need the both of you to do something else." He turned back to Fleur. "Fleur, it's possible the Triwizard cup still might have the original portkey in it and Crouch only put a new destination on top of it, but I can't take the chance." He reached into his drawer and pulled out a silver knife. "Harry will need to be cut out of those ropes before you can portkey him away. This knife can sever any cords magical or none." Pulling out his wand and concentrating, he tapped it to the knife and said "Portus!", then he repeated the same charm again. He slid it into a small scabbard and handed it to her. "It is now a portkey as well. Word activated by the phrase 'Bond of Love'. First time it is activated, it will take you to a short distance from the graveyard. The next time will bring you to where you started. I'm also going to disillusion you, but be careful. Voldemort, like myself, can easily identify disillusioned people when he is around them. I'm hoping it helps get you past Nagini and Wormtail."

Fleur nodded as she accepted the knife. Dumbledore raised his wand and lightly touched her head. Fleur felt a cold feeling trickle down her body. "Good luck." He said to the nearly invisible young woman. Fleur glanced once more at her bond sisters. "I'll bring 'im back, I promise." Then she grabbed the hilt of the silver knife and whispered 'Bond of Love.' " Just before she felt the pull from behind her navel, she whispered in her mind. "I'm coming 'Arry." And she disappeared.

When Fleur had disappeared, Dumbledore turned to the rest of the people in the office. "I want the rest of us reasonably close in case we are needed." He looked at Hermione. "I want you to be the link between us. So we know if we're needed." He then turned his attention to Gabrielle. "Gabrielle, Ginny, I want you two to go back to the pitch. I am going to need my Professors and others to be ready. I want you to be my link to them." All three young ladies just nodded.

"I'll go wiz Gabrielle." Apolline Delacour said and received a nod from her husband. She, Ginny and Gabrielle immediately started for the door.

Dumbledore stood up and his gaze fell upon the still unconscious Moody. His wand was out again and the silver phoenix materialized once more. "Severus, come to my office and bring your strongest truth serum. You will find Moody in a body bind on the floor. It is not him. It is someone polyjuiced to be him. I need you to guard him and when the potion wears off, I need you to interrogate him to find out what his purpose was."

Alain Delacour studied the Headmaster carefully. While he was investigating Sirius and Remus he had also done a small amount of investigation into the Potions Master that his daughters complained about regularly. "Ees zat wise?" He asked the Headmaster. "We know Voldemort is doing somezing tonight and you are trusting a former Death Eater to guard someone who seems to be working wiz Voldemort?"

"I trust Severus with my life Monsieur Delacour."

"Zat's all fine and good 'eadmaster, but in zis case it is other people's lives you are trusting 'im wiz." The French politician replied. "My daughters already 'ave many complaints against ze man. If 'e

causes zem 'arm tonight, I will 'old you personally responsible." The gaze that passed between the two men was short but very thorough.

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"Sir, Fleur is in the graveyard and unnoticed it seems, but Peter just started a ritual in the Cauldron." Hermione said.

"I'm coming 'arry." Harry heard in his mind before he felt Fleur disappear from his mind.

"NO!" He mentally shouted back to Fleur as soon as he felt her reappear after the portkey. "Stay away....don't...I'm not worth..."

When Fleur heard what Harry was saying she cut him off in mid thought. "Don't you tell me my bond mate isn't worth eet. What did you tell me in ze maze when you saved my life? If you were in danger, I'd save yours? You are in danger and I will do what I 'ave to do to save you my love. Do not EVER tell me you aren't worth it."

Harry found out quickly that all three of his bond mates wanted to be there. "Just be careful. I'd prefer to die than let anything happen to you."

"We need to talk about zat zis summer 'Arry, but for now promise me you will not die."

"I can't promise that my flower." He replied as his attention was drawn back on the Cauldron in front of him. A scream tried to get out of Harry's throat as Wormtail unwrapped the thing in the robes. The size of an infant, the horrible creature Wormtail picked up was hairless, scaly and was reddish black. Its arms and legs were thin and feeble, and its face - no child alive ever had a face like that - flat and snakelike, with gleaming red eyes.

Harry watched in horror as Wormtail lowered the creature into the cauldron. He fervently wished for it to drown in the liquids.

Fleur took the opportunity of the distracted Wormtail to rush several headstones closer to her bond mate but had to stop as the stooped little man turned around and walked directly toward Harry. She smiled some when she saw him walking with a limp and noticed the gash in his robes where Harry had connected with his curse. When

he pulled his wand out, Fleur almost cursed him, but then she remembered how easily her bond mate could be killed.

Wormtail started speaking. His voice shook; he seemed frightened beyond his wits. He raised his wand, closed his eyes, and spoke to the night.

"Bone of the father, unknowingly given, you will renew your son!"

The grave Harry was bound to cracked open and a fine trail of dust left the opening and fell softly into the Cauldron. The surface of the water hissed and sparks flew in all directions. The color changed to vivid disgusting blue color.

"Don't do it Wormtail." Harry yelled but the traitorous marauder continued as if he didn't hear Harry at all but started whimpering even louder as he pulled out a long silver dagger.

Fleur again moved quickly as she watched Wormtail cut off his own hand and toss it into the cauldron turning its color to a bright red; she made it to the tombstone Harry was tied to.

"Distract him." She said to Harry. "I have to cut you loose."

"Why Wormtail?" Harry yelled. "Some Gryffindor you turned out to be. Betrayed my father and mother and now betraying me as well." But again Peter ignored him and after wrapping his stump in his robes he started back toward Harry.

Fleur was in the shadows of the grave and still disillusioned. She had seen Nagini a couple of times but so far the snake had not seemed to notice her but she knew every second counted, though she couldn't work too fast or the sound might draw attention to her.

Peter was now moaning in agony, but he now was walking over to the grave again. Fleur had to stop cutting or the sound or the ropes moving might alert him. "As soon as 'e turns his back again I can be finished."

"B-blood of the enemy . . . forcibly taken . . . you will. . . resurrect your foe."

Harry just wanted him to finish so he could get free. He ignored the pain of the dagger digging into his arm. As Wormtail turned away from Harry with the vial of blood, Fleur made the last few cuts and the ropes fell free.

"Accio Harry's wand." Fleur yelled and out of Wormtail's pocket came flying the phoenix feather wand. Harry snatched it out of the air with his good hand. Wormtail spun around and a look of panic crossed his face as he saw a totally free Harry Potter brandishing his wand.

"Don't do it Wormtail. Drop my blood." Harry said but as Wormtail turned and started to pour he yelled "Accio V.."

"Harry watch out." Fleur yelled as she sent a cutting curse at Nagini who had been poised to strike at Harry. A wide gash opened along the snake's side as the curse struck true. The snake slithered away into the darkness trailing a line of blood after itself.

The distraction was all Peter needed to pour the blood into the cauldron. When it was done, he tried to stumble away into the darkness. As the liquid in the cauldron turned brilliant white, five apparition cracks sounded in the graveyard.

The first thing Harry saw was a streak of black rushing across the graveyard, but everything became unsettled as the brilliant glow of the Cauldron died away abruptly. The change from brilliant glow to darkness left Harry mostly blind.

"Harry, Fleur you should leave now." A familiar grandfatherly voice said. Harry turned and could only feel relief to see Albus Dumbledore staring at him but then another voice balanced out the night.

"Oh but he should stay Albus." A high-pitched voice said. A man, if you could call him that stood next to the cauldron. Skin whiter than white, eyes red as blood and a nose that didn't exist as he only had slits for nostrils. With a flick of his hand a wand jumped from the robes at his feet into his hand.

"Hello Tom." Dumbledore said.

The red eyes were fixed on the Headmaster. Harry couldn't understand why Dumbledore didn't finish him off, but with speed faster than Harry could imagine especially from someone who was just brought back to life, Voldemort had brought his wand up in Harry's direction. "AVADA KEDAVRA!"

Harry froze as he watched the green light he'd seen so many times in his Dementor driven memories race toward him. Suddenly an old broken headstone met it in midflight. Harry felt the sting of pieces of the headstone that had been smashed into hundreds of bits pelt his face and body.

The blood that traced down his jaw from one of those scratches brought Harry out of his frozen state and he had his own wand out. "Lacero!" he shouted wanting to see the creature who had killed his parents hurt or killed, but Voldemort casually knocked it away.

"Harry go with Fleur, get out of here." Dumbledore repeated.

"Harry come with me love, lets.." Fleur started but was cut off by Voldemort.

"Ah, Harry Potter is in love." The high-pitch voice said as he looked at the boy "I guess Dumbledore has told you all about how great he thinks love is. I will tell you again what I told you three years ago, the only thing that matters is power." He once again leveled his wand at Harry and said "AVADA KEDAVRA!"

Harry had noticed the slight shift in Voldemort's wand to a position he knew Fleur was standing. He didn't know if Dumbledore had seen the shift or not, but he couldn't take the chance. "NO! FLEUR GET DOWN." He yelled but he was already moving as well. It was just like catching a snitch at the top speed a Firebolt could go. His mind already knew where his body needed to be and two steps and a dive and he was in the path of the curse. As the green light enveloped him he felt nothing more.

"NON!" Fleur screamed as she raced to Harry's side as she felt her bond with Harry shift. It felt like it had disappeared but was still there as well. She fell to her knees beside him, not caring what else happened to her. She cast a quick finite command to remove the disillusionment so she could see her hands. Tears erupted in her eyes and streaked down her face and she looked at Harry.

When his curse hit Potter pain erupted throughout Voldemort's body bringing him to his knees. Only pure instinct allowed him to block hexes from two of the people who had noticed his weakened state and had tried to take advantage. Voldemort knew he had to get away. The advantage was no longer his. Voldemort realized he hadn't done all he had wanted to do that night, but he had accomplished the two most important ones. He had a body and Harry Potter was dead. He looked at his old Professor and a cruel evil smile appeared. "And so ends the prophecy."

When Dumbledore had led the small amount of people he had into the graveyard, a black-haired man immediately had shifted into a form of a dog and was gone in a streak after another man who had betrayed him and his friends trust so many years ago. Streaking across the graveyard he caught up with the man and knocked him to the ground. As the dog transformed back into a man, the man said, "Hello Peter, fancy meeting you here."

Peter Pettigrew looked around for his master in hopes he might be saved but saw him surrounded by Dumbledore, Moony and a man he didn't recognize. Looking back at Sirius he saw the tip of a wand an inch from his nose.

"I won't make the same mistake I made last year Wormtail. Stupefy." Sirius said and the red light hit his old friend in the face. Sirius noticed the stump for the first time and quickly conjured a tourniquet and put it on the arm. "I'm not about to let you die." He whispered to the man who betrayed his brother in all but blood. "Not yet anyway."

Sirius turned around to look for his godson. He was just in time to witness Voldemort casting the killing curse at Fleur. He watched, as if in slow motion as Harry leapt in front of it to save Fleur's life. As he watched his godson collapse in the darkness of the graveyard, Sirius' mind went numb and his body followed. He sunk to his knees as the weakness took over his body and then he fell the last couple of feet to the ground. As he lay beside his captive, Sirius realized he had made the same mistake he had made thirteen years ago. He had wanted revenge more than he had wanted to protect Harry. Ironically he realized as a crystal clear thought broke through his muddled brain, that he had a good chance of going free with the capture of Pettigrew, but now he had no life he wanted to return to.

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As Harry lay there with his eyes closed, he realized that dying wasn't so bad. "At least the pain in my arms is gone." He thought to himself. "Fourteen and I'm already dead. I guess I've been on borrowed time for the last thirteen of them." He then slowly opened his eyes to see what the afterlife had in store for him only to find himself back in the bondimage again. Or at least that was his first impression. He found himself lying in the house he had imagined all those years ago, the same house that represented his bondimage. But this time he was lying on the library floor completely naked. He sat up quickly looked around hoping to see Hermone. Then remembering he was dead, he didn't want to see her. He felt himself entirely alone, no sounds of any kind could be heard. He started to become self-conscious about not having clothes on and just as he thought it, a pile of new clothes appeared beside him.

"I never imagined the afterlife being like this." Harry thought after he had pulled his clothes on and began to explore the house. He wandered from room to room and soon found a major difference in this house than the one he dreamed of during his earlier years. There was a door where no door ever existed before. It was a cupboard door, one designed for under the stairs. He stood and stared at the door for the longest time. He felt a desire to open it and another to run away from it.

"Open it." A feminine voice said behind him. Harry recognized the voice. It was as familiar as the green light of the killing curse. He had heard it so many times screaming "Not Harry, not Harry, please not Harry!" He spun around on the spot to come face to face with a person he only knew from pictures in the album Hagrid had given him and from the Mirror of Erised. "Mum?"

"Oh Harry." She cried out and put her arms around her son.

"And I thought those hugs were for me." Another voice said. Again it was a voice Harry heard when the Dementors were close. ""Lily, take Harry and go! It's him! Go! Run!"

"Dad?" Harry said as he looked over his mother's shoulder and saw a man who looked almost like himself just a little older.

"Son, we are so proud of you." James Potter said. "You've grown into a fine young man."

Harry felt his father's arms wrap around his mother and him. Before February this had been his dream, this house, his Mum and Dad, a family. But now something was missing. Something else belonged in this house, some ones that is.

"Is this a dream or is it real? Am I dead?" Harry asked his parents.

A thumping, struggling sound came from behind the cupboard door. Harry turned and gave the door a quizzical look. Something told him he had to look, but another part knew he didn't want to see what was there.

"It can't hurt you now son." His father said. "It's no longer a part of you."

"Part of me?" Harry asked as his hand reached for the knob. As he opened the door he saw his old mattress on the floor, and upon it was a small naked child looking thing with flayed skin gasping for breath. "What is it?"

"A part of Voldemort's soul son." Lily Potter answered and then explained. "The night we died, when he tried to kill you, his soul was too fragile for the stress of the killing curse rebounding upon him. It split and a part of it lodged in your scar."

Harry remembered a conversation he had with Professor Dumbledore two years previous.

"Unless I'm much mistaken, he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar. Not something he intended to do, I'm sure ..."

"Voldemort put a bit of himself in me?"

"It certainly seems so."

He looked at his mother, "Dumbledore knew didn't he? He knew it was in me. He told me when I came out of the Chamber that Voldemort had transferred something to me."

"He suspected it Harry, but recently he had become convinced." James Potter said. "He believed you had to die before Voldemort could."

"A horcrux? That thing was a horcrux and he didn't tell me?" Harry said, his voice rising. "He didn't tell me I had to die?" Then he sighed as he deflated. "He was proved correct then wasn't he?" Harry said softly. "I'm dead." A sense of loss descended upon him as he could see the three faces of his bond mates.

"That's your choice to make Harry." Lily said. "You can choose to go back or go on."

"How can I go back?" Harry asked. "I'm dead aren't I?"

"Not quite, you are neither dead nor alive right now." Lily replied. "You are just here, but you must choose soon. You can go on and join us in what Dumbledore calls the Next Great Adventure, or return to your life and to your new family."

"You know about them?"

"Of course Harry, we are watching you every day." James said and then rustled his son's unruly hair. "Were you trying to outdo me son? Three beautiful and intelligent witches?" His father gave a wry grin. "Though I will warn you that just one of them is hard enough to deal with."

"Hey." Lily said though she was smiling at her husband.

"It..it wasn't my idea Dad." Harry said. "But I love them, all of them, but I don't deserve them."

"Let them decide if you deserve them or not son." James said.

"You think I should go back?"

"That's a decision you have to make, but you should know what you face if you do." Lily replied. "Dumbledore has kept one other piece of information from you. It is the whole reason we were killed and why Voldemort has tried to kill you so many times."

"There was a prophecy made about you Harry." His father said. "Shortly before you were born, Albus heard a prophecy that suggested you were the only one who could kill Voldemort." James looked over at Lily before continuing. "Se..someone overheard some of it and told Voldemort. Make Dumbledore tell it to you, or if he won't, you can listen to it in the Department of Mysteries at the Ministry."

"I..I have to kill Voldemort if I go back?" Harry asked. "How?"

"We don't know." Lily said. "But don't be like Albus and think you have to do it alone. You have people you can trust to help you, who want to help you, let them."

"You don't have much time left here son." James said. "You have to decide if you are going on, or going back."

"I..I want to be with you but," Harry started as once again the memories of his bond mates surfaced.

"Son, someday you'll return here and we'll have an eternity to spend together." James said. "Hopefully when you make it back we can watch your children and grandchildren together then."

"Just remember we love you Harry." Lily said. "And we love your bonded. They are all very special women. Give them our love."

"Just a couple of things before you go." James said. "Ask Albus about our wills soon."

"Why?"

"I was foolish when I died Harry." Harry's father admitted with a sigh. "I thought it would be great prank to protect them the same way the marauder's map is protected. I loved the idea of someone at the Ministry getting insulted, but I never thought that every single Marauder would not be available when it came time to unseal them. Dumbledore has been working hard to do what he thought was right for you. He really does care what happens to you Harry."

"Cares enough to make sure I'm ok with the Dursleys? Cares enough to not tell me I was supposed die."

"I can't tell you to forgive him Harry, but before you think badly of him, put yourself in his shoes the night he left you with Tuney and Vernon and ask yourself what you would have done. He had a way to protect you and did it." Lily said. "Think of what happened to the Longbottoms. If you could have been found, you would have suffered a similar or worse fate. The Longbottoms were our friends Harry, very bright and very good with magic and yet they still were caught."

Harry hadn't thought of that. He remembered the pensieve memory of the trial of the people who had tortured the Longbottoms into insanity. "I never thought of that." He admitted.

His mother gave him a long hug. "Sometimes you don't have all the information and you would really have to have lived during that time to fully understand." She said. "I would like to ask a personal favor if I could. Alice and Frank were very good friends of ours. Do you think you could spend some time with their son?"

"Of course Mum."

"Alice and I were pregnant at the same time and we always swore the two of you would grow up together as brothers. Did you know Neville was born the day before you?"

Harry thought of a different world where he and Neville grew up together in the magical world.

"Now as for Tuney and her family, I can never forgive them for how they treated you." Lily said. "But it seems you and your friends paid them back for some of your suffering. You must understand that she was very jealous of me. She lashed out the only way she could by calling me and Severus freaks." She saw the look on her son's face. "Yes she called me a freak as well. If she bothers you again, you can try to ask her why she wrote to Professor Dumbledore and asked to be invited there as well."

"She..she wanted to be a witch?" Harry asked as his whole world turned upside down.

"Yes son." Lily replied. "And I'd like for you to give one last message. Tell Severus I can forgive him for myself, but never for what he has done to you."

"Sirius and Remus said he called you a mudblood." Harry said. "Is that what you are forgiving?"

"He'll know what it is."

"Ok son, it's time." James said. "If you're going back it has to be now. Tell Moony and Padfoot I said I miss them, but they better not plan on visiting anytime soon."

"I will dad."

"I Love you son and I am really proud of you." James said. "Once you find a way to kick that monster's arse, I expect you to enjoy life, because every day you are happy you bring your mother happiness."

Harry's eyes were filled with tears now. His parents were fading into a mist along with the house. He could barely hear his mother's final "I love you". Darkness overcame him and he heard another voice one with a french accent laden with tears. "I love you 'Arry." She was sobbing over and over.

"I love you too Fleur." Harry said as he opened his eyes. He grimaced as the pain in his arms returned but it reminded him he was alive again. Fleur was no longer disillusioned but in the darkness Harry could barely see her tears rolling down her cheeks from her blue eyes. But when he spoke those words a rush of emotions poured over the bond; love, disbelief, shock and amazement. Their eyes locked for a second. Green emeralds to her blue topaz.

"How....but you were dead, I felt you disappear...." Fleur said.

"Do you think dying can keep me away from you?" Harry said with a smile. "I'll tell you later." He promised and quickly gave her a small kiss and rolled off the ground. He could hear Voldemort taunting Dumbledore about the prophecy. Remembering his parent's words about the prophecy and what he was destined to do, but it was more than that, before him was the man who tried to kill Fleur. Harry felt a surge inside of him and he yelled the first hex that came to mind, "LACERO!" The red arc of light left his wand on a true path toward Voldemort.

Voldemort heard the hex and felt it headed toward him, he casually flicked his wand to pull a headstone in its path but as he turned to look at his opponent he lost his concentration. Staring at him was the boy he had just killed.

"YOU!" Voldemort screamed in astonishment.

The headstone he had pulled into the path of the red light only blocked only part of the hex while the rest hit Voldemort across the chest. He momentarily stumbled as a wide gash appeared and blood started flowing freely from Voldemort's new body. Without another thought Lord Voldemort gave the slightest of turns and was gone, apparating to the only spot he remembered where he could find help. Unrobed, with no servant, and seriously injured, he was forced to flee from the place he had planned his great return.

Sirius heard his godson's voice shouting a curse and at first believed his ears were playing tricks on him, but when he heard Voldemort yell out in astonishment, he crawled to his hands and knees looked toward the voices and saw Harry.

A/N: The next chapter might take a little while as I sort through what needs to be done and organize it. When I first started this chapter, I had planned on a more canon approach to the graveyard, but realized with this advantage, a little Voldemort butt kicking was necessary. How was the graveyard scene? Did I get anywhere close to all right?

One last thought. Since Wormtail put his whole hand into the Cauldron, didn't he also give bone and blood as well as flesh? It seems like his hand would have had more blood in it, than he collected from Harry and possibly more bone as well.

Chapter 28

Voldemort appeared in front of a set of iron gates that led up to a large mansion. He could feel the powerful wards that surrounded the home. He looked down at his chest and saw the large laceration that was freely spilling blood. Blood that now covered most of his lower body. He felt weak. The newly created body didn't have enough blood yet to be spilling this large of an amount. He quickly moved his wand to the gash and as it trailed over the opening the skin started to close until only a thick red line of scar tissue remained. Voldemort then looked around until he found a branch laying under a tree. He quickly transfigured it into a passable robe and hood. Robed and mostly healed he put his hands onto the gates and felt the magic give way to his own.

"Well Lucius, at least you didn't remove me from your wards." He thought as the gates opened in front of him. Once he was through the wards he apparated onto the front steps of the mansion. He felt more wards around the door but this time he couldn't feel a sense of acceptance from it. He quickly overwhelmed the defenses with his own magic and opened the door.

Lucius Malfoy had been uneasy all evening. He had a feeling that something was going to happen. The mark upon his arm was as red as the day his master was alive. When he felt the wards around his property allow entry he wasn't too concerned. He had friends who were always welcome. Minister Fudge had even suggested he might stop by after the last event of the tournament was completed. When he felt the wards disintegrate from his front door though he immediately grabbed his wand and hurried toward the entryway. As he neared the hallway he could see a shabbily robed and hooded individual was standing there. He knew whoever it was, they were uninvited and he had only one response. He made the proper motion and a quiet stunning spell was sent toward the individual. Malfoy was surprised when one of Narcissa's priceless vases rose in the air and intercepted the spell as it disintegrated.

"Lucius....Lucius, is this is how you greet your Master?" A high pitched voice came from under the hood. Long white slender fingers rose to lower the cloth that surrounding the face of the intruder.

"M...my Lord." Lucius responded when he saw who it was. He quickly knelt and bowed his head as he asked the question. "Bu...but how? I mean I knew you would, it has been.."

"Enough!" Voldemort replied forcefully and then turned to the ashen faced blond witch who had just arrived to see what the noise of the vase smashing had been. "Ah, Narcissa bring me some essence of Dittany immediately and a blood replenishing potion as well."

Though Narcissa Malfoy was shocked to her core to see the Dark Lord alive and in her home, years of obeying her own husband kept the shock off her face and she replied instantly. "Yes my Lord." She walked quickly out of the hall and disappeared.

Turning back to Lucius he said. "Rise Lucius. I have need of you. Have your elf bring me your finest robes."

"I no longer have an elf my lord, but I'll attend to it myself."

A quick passive Legilimency scanned told Voldemort what had happened two years prior. Considering the past few minutes of his own life he decided not to mention it to Malfoy. Voldemort knew that at a later time he would exact revenge upon the man for losing one of his horcruxes. As he watched his death eater walk quickly away he started prioritizing his own needs. He knew there were many things he needed to do to reacquire the power he once had. Many thoughts ran through his mind on what those were but the main one was persistent.

"I have to know the complete prophecy before I do anything." He thought. "Potter has now survived the killing curse twice. I can't afford to make another mistake."

Narcissa was the first back with a vial of a reddish brown liquid and a brown bottle. Not trusting anyone, Voldemort cast a potion detection spell and was soon satisfied the vial was in fact a blood replenishing potion. He unstopped it and quickly consumed the contents. He could feel the rush as strength poured back into his body as the potion did its work. Opening his robes to reveal the scar upon his chest he looked at Narcissa and commanded. "Attend me."

With only the smallest of hesitations at the sight of the Dark Lord, Narcissa opened the brown bottle and dabbed several drops onto a

cloth. Controlling her desire to wretch at the sight of the body in front of her, she ran the cloth over the red wound. By the time she was finished Lucius was back with his best robes and with a bow handed them to his master.

When Voldemort was properly attired and healed, he pulled Lucius's left arm toward him and placed one of his long white fingers onto the red tattoo that stood out on his forearm. He smiled both at the look of pain that shot through the Death Eater and at the thought of his servants returning to his side.

"Now we shall see who is brave enough to return when they feel it, and how many will be foolish enough to stay away." He turned to Lucius. "Lower your wards for now. I want my faithful to come directly to me. I will replace them shortly with wards of my own creation."

Lucius only hesitated a split second before he made the necessary adjustments.

Voldemort moved to the Den off of the entry way and sat upon the large high backed chair that Lucius had for himself. It had a throne like quality. Minutes passed until finally dark cloaked figures started appearing and looking around at where they were. No one at first noticed the man in the chair but several saw Lucius Malfoy. Walden McNair whipped off his silver mask and turned angrily toward Malfoy.

"How did you make the mark burn Malfoy?" McNair said. "Answer me or I'll kill you where you stand."

"He didn't." Said a high pitched voice said as Voldemort rose from his chair. "I did."

****E E****

As Harry watched Voldemort apparate away, the evening caught up to him. He staggered against a headstone and slid down to the ground physically and emotionally drained. He felt the pain from both of his arms but in comparison to the exhaustion he felt it was only a minor annoyance. Around him reigned silence. One moment there had been spell fire, crying and numerous other sounds of a small battle, the next moment nothing. The only sounds that now could be heard in the graveyard in Little Hangleton were those of

crickets crying out for mates. That did not include the sounds in Harry's head as two other young women who both had thought Harry dead as well, slowly realized he was alive again. As the emotionally and physically drained body of Harry Potter sat upon the grave of one of Voldemort's father's father, he barely felt the arms of his oldest bond mate encircle him. As she physically held him, he tried his best to assure his other two bond mates that he really was alive. He could feel their grief being replaced with love, joy and many other emotions.

Dumbledore had had too many years of fighting in his life to let his guard down too quickly, but after warily glancing around the graveyard, he felt the battle was over. He could see Sirius kneeling beside Peter Pettigrew, Remus and Alain both looking in disbelief at Harry and Fleur who had made her way over to Harry and was holding him as if she was afraid to let him go. As he watched the couple he noticed movement to their right. "Nagini." Dumbledore thought before calling out a warning. "Fleur to your right."

Though physically and emotional drained herself, it did not keep the young Veela Witch from reacting to protect her bond mate. She spun her head and her wand at the same time and saw the snake. It appeared to be circling her and Harry in the long grass, either trying to escape the graveyard or possibly trying to finish what her master had been unable to do. Fleur could see the long gash along its body from the first time she had hit it. She sent another cutting curse at the snake and this time smiled with satisfaction as the head of the snake was severed from its body. Just as she sighed in relief that the creature was dead, a long drawn out scream pierced the silence. Everyone's wands were up again instantly but only confusion reigned as the scream seemed to come from the body of the snake. Finally after just a few seconds the sound faded away to nothing.

Dumbledore stared at the body of the snake as the scream finally ended. His mind flooded with suspicions of what had just happened as he remembered a young man of only twelve telling him of a scream that had seemed to come from a diary as he stabbed it with a basilisk fang.

Everyone was now gathered around Harry and Fleur. Sirius had Pettigrew bound and was levitating him. Harry looked up at the Headmaster with tired eyes. "Sir, there two other ladies I really need to see. Can we go back to Hogwarts now?"

"Yes of course Harry." Dumbledore replied. "I will go retrieve Miss Granger from our staging area. The rest of you can take the Portkey Fleur has and return to my office."

"Not yet sir. 'Arry arms." Fleur said. She touched her wand to Harry's broken arm and said "Episkey." Harry felt warmth spread through his arm and he watched the bones move into the right spot. A few seconds later the pain was entirely gone.

"I should 'ave done zat earlier love, but I...." Fleur didn't finish as Harry's lips had found hers again for a light kiss and he mentally thanked her. He smiled as he asked. "Where were you two years ago? That was much better than Lockhart."

"Two years ago I was but a little girl." She replied in the same tone she had used so many months previously in describing Harry. "A little girl who definitely would not have deserved a husband like you." She smiled at her bond mate as she held out her hand to help Harry to his feet. Then so everyone could hear she said "I had to fix your arm my love. I know how you land with portkeys." The smile and laughter from Harry made her feel much better. She pulled him to his feet and pulled out the knife. As they all gathered around the portkey, nobody saw the uninvited guest, currently in her beetle animagus form, crawl back under the collar of an unsuspecting Remus Lupin.

****E E****

Rita Skeeter desperately wanted to get back to her quill and notepad and start writing the story of the decade. "Stories." She reminded herself. Rita had just watched He-who-must-not-be-named return to life. As she started mentally putting together the story that would be front page on tomorrow's Prophet, she couldn't help but think of what led her to be where she was.

It had started innocently enough. Rita had been invited to the Triwizrd tournament's third task by Minister Fudge. She came prepared to write a follow up piece to the sacking of Ludo Bagman. She'd already confirmed with the Minister that he planned on announcing Amos Diggory would take Bagman's spot immediately after the tournament. She knew Fudge couldn't announce it any sooner with Diggory's son competing. So in preparation for that

announcement and in hopes of interviewing the winner, she made sure she had a seat as close to the judges table as possible.

She had been curious when Gabrielle Delacour and her friend had interrupted the judges, but when the Granger girl had shown up as well and Dumbledore led them away she smelled a story was brewing. Skeeter's attention was drawn to the exchange happening between the young ladies and the Headmaster. She had watched as the bushy haired girl had shown Dumbledore something on a piece of parchment causing the Headmaster to move swiftly toward the hedges. Though she had been tempted, she didn't follow them at that time. She had been one of the few people to notice Dumbledore and Granger walking quickly toward the castle a few minutes later.

Skeeter, like everyone else was astounded a short time later when Dumbledore's Phoenix flamed into the area fairly close to the judges table. The majestic bird had made a loop of the area before sweeping down in front of a person Rita instantly recognized as the younger Delacour. An uproar of noise occurred as the young lady and her friend disappeared with Fawkes in a flaming exit. That had been too much for Skeeter, she had to know what was going on. She quickly found an area to transform into her animagus form and started flying toward the castle. Along the way she came across the elder Delacours, the werewolf who had taught at the castle the previous year and a large black dog racing toward the castle as well. Knowing Lupin was a friend of Harry Potter, Rita quickly made a decision. She landed on the man's shoulder and crawled under the collar of his robe where she waited.

Soon the Prophet reporter found herself in Dumbledore's office only to be shocked by the initial words she had heard. "Harry has been taken by Voldemort and we are trying to find a way to get to him."

She had heard the brief discussion about an impostor being Moody and then Fleur, Hermione and Gabrielle all started telling the Headmaster things about Harry as if he was talking to them in some way. Telling him what supposedly He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named was telling Harry. She had almost stunned out of her Beetle form again when the most wanted man in Britain, Sirius Black had transformed from the large black dog into himself and NO ONE in the room seemed to be surprised. Her first thought had been about an article implicating The Headmaster of Hogwarts and the Deputy Minister of Magic of France in covering up the location of Sirius

Black, but then she had thought about what Harry Potter had said about Sirius Black. "If Sirius Black is actually innocent, it would rock the judicial world and breaking that story would be huge."

When talking about rescuing Harry they had mentioned Peter Pettigrew's name as if he was still alive. "If Sirius is innocent then maybe..." Rita had thought as another story raced into her mind. The Prophet reporter then watched the older Delacour sister portkey out in trying to rescue Harry after calling him her bond mate whatever that was.

Shortly after Fleur had left, Rita found herself on a portkey to a waiting area in a place Dumbledore had said was Little Hangleton. A short time later the young muggleborn witch had told Dumbledore that Harry was free and immediately they had all apparated to a graveyard.

When He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named had sent the first killing curse at Harry, Rita had quickly left Lupin's collar and hid in case the wand was turned on the werewolf. She had watched as Harry Potter had willingly sacrificed himself for the older Delacour and was shocked as everyone else in the graveyard when Harry rose to his feet. "Boy-who-lived, lives again." Ran through Rita's mind for a different headline in a coming Prophet edition. The final shocking event was when Potter had hit You-Know-Who with a cutting hex. Watching a wounded Dark Lord apparate away only led to another story she envisioned once the story was out.

As she felt the familiar tug of a portkey when Fleur Delacour activated the portkey, she was entirely thankful for the day Harry Potter had agreed to give her an interview. She could already imagine the various awards and bonuses she would be receiving.

****E E****

At Malfoy Manor Voldemort had shared his history with his Death Eaters, explaining how he had returned torturing several of them as he did so. He described the resurrection ritual and then blamed the failures of the evening on Wormtail. He didn't mention being wounded by Harry Potter or that Harry had survived another of his killing curses. After finishing his tale he then turned to Malfoy.

"Lucius. I want you to take several people to the graveyard in Little Hangleton. Kill anyone who is still there and remove any evidence of my return. I have a pet snake that should still be in the graveyard somewhere. Bring her to me."

"Yes my Lord." Malfoy replied and called out several names of people to follow him. Slipping on his silver Death Eater's mask, Lucius and the other Death Eaters he had selected apparated away to the Graveyard.

Voldemort turned to McNair. "Walden, your job is to find a way to kill Pettigrew. He knows several of the plans I have in mind. He must not get a chance to talk."

"But Dumble..." Started McNair but quickly cut it off and replied, "Yes my Lord." He started hoping Pettigrew was kept at the Ministry so he would have a chance to get to him.

E E

Gabrielle and her mother had been explaining to Professor McGonagall and Flitwick what was happening with Harry and Voldemort when the killing curse had struck Harry. Gabrielle couldn't help but shriek "Arry's been killed!" when it happened. Several students heard the exclamation and quickly the rumors of what people thought were rushing around the stadium. One of the rumors quickly created and passed on was that Sirius Black had appeared in the maze and killed Harry in cold blood.

When the rumors made their way to the Minister of Magic he quickly summoned two Dementors in case the rumors were true.

Apolline Delacour's heart was crushed as her daughter started to explain that Harry had leapt in front of a killing curse to save Fleur's life but as the tearful explanation continued, Gabrielle expression changed.

"E..'Arry...'Arry is alive." The smile through the tears from the young Veela confused her mother.

"Ow? Are you sure."

"Yes... 'E's alive mamam. I can feel 'im and 'ear 'im." Gabrielle replied. "Voldemort's gone. 'Arry drove 'im off. 'Urt 'im."

Professor McGonagall and Flitwick were trying to keep up with what was going on. When Gabrielle and Apolline Delacour had first found them, McGonagall had to explain to the diminutive Charm's professor about the bond Harry and his bond mates shared.

"Are you saying Harry survived another killing curse?" Flitwick asked in disbelief.

"Oui." Gabrielle replied. "Oh zey are coming back now. Mamam we need to go to ze 'eadmaster's office. I need to see 'Arry."

Flitwick looked at McGonagall. "We have no one left in the maze to patrol for. You go with.." It was then the cold, helpless feeling of the Dementors descended over the area as the wraithlike creatures appeared. Flitwick reconsidered the original thoughts and finished. "Maybe you should stay if those creatures are going to be here."

"I wonder what they are doing here." McGonagall asked. She then looked at Gabrielle who was turning to head to the castle. "Let Dumbledore know of the Dementors."

"Oui. I will." Gabrielle replied and she with her mother being dragged behind, quickly departed toward the castle. They were almost at the castle when Gabrielle stopped. "Zey are coming down 'ere."

E E

"He had quite a story to tell." Snape was telling Dumbledore in his office. When everyone had arrived back, Dumbledore had to diffuse a glaring contest between Snape and Sirius before asking about their prisoner who he instantly recognized as Crouch Jr.

Snape continued on explaining how Crouch's father, upon his mother's pleading had rescued him from Azkaban. Substituting his wife for his son with Polyjuice potion. How he'd been hidden away for all the years since, how the Dark Lord had found out about him through Bertha Jorkins and had rescued him. As Crouch Jr. glared at him, Snape continued telling everyone what he had learned from the interrogation. He explained how Crouch had overpowered the

real Moody before the school year and taken his place. At that Dumbledore turned to Hermione.

"Miss Granger. Did you say you think Alastor Moody is in his office?"

Hermione pulled out the map and showed the Headmaster the dot that coincided with the Moody.

"Remus, could you please go see if you can find Alastor and get him to Poppy if he needs attention." Dumbledore asked. He then nodded to the magical eye and peg leg. "Take those. He'll want them."

"Of course." Lupin replied and was picking up the items when Hermione said. "Wait, stop."

Everyone looked at her in confusion until she walked over to Lupin and within a couple of seconds she had scooped a beetle off his collar. "You seemed to have picked up a bug in the graveyard Moony." She then handed the map to Lupin. "Take this; it will help you find him once you're in his office."

Remus took the map and hurried out of the office.

As Snape continued his tale of the confession of Crouch Jr. Hermione walked over to a corner and quietly started talking to the beetle with odd marking around its eyes. "Before you publish anything talk to us first. A lot has happened tonight and I'm all for most of it being reported, but there are some things best left out of the story. One of us will meet you at the same tree as before in two hours."

The beetle buzzed its wings and Hermione opened a window a little and let the Beetle out.

Crouch Jr. sneered as he spoke the first words since everyone had appeared back in the room. "My Master is back isn't he? His plan worked flawlessly."

"Yes he has obtained a body." Dumbledore replied. "As for flawlessly, if you consider he had to flee a graveyard with no clothes and heavily wounded by young Mr. Potter as flawlessly, then I guess you can say that." He then addressed everyone in the office. "Let's

get Harry to the hospital wing and then go speak to the judges about the tournament."

"No." Harry said firmly. "I'm fine. I need to get to Gabrielle and then Fleur and I are going to finish what we started this evening." He then stared directly at his Headmaster. "Tomorrow, we need to talk about a lot of things including a prophecy."

Alain Delacour as a politician had developed an ability to recognize another person's thoughts by their facial reaction. He and everyone else in the graveyard had heard Voldemort mention a prophecy but he also knew Severus Snape had not been there. The minute reaction Snape had made when Harry had mentioned the word prophecy was interesting. It wasn't surprise he had seen, but more of like the word had brought back a painful memory.

Dumbledore piercing blue eyed gaze only found a very determined pair of emerald eyes looking back at him. He instantly knew that tonight had changed something in his relationship with Harry. "Very well." He said finally. "I am sure there is definitely much to discuss. For now though, if you're sure you're well enough, we can head down to the maze and finish up there." He turned to Snape, "Severus, if you will take Crouch to the..."

"Sir, Gabrielle said to tell you that there are Dementors at the Maze." Hermione said.

Dumbledore was about to reply when he saw Snape clutch his forearm while at the same time Crouch Jr. cried out in exhilaration, "My master calls. He lives. I shall be rewarded beyond imagination." Dumbledore gazed at Snape until finally he said. "Severus, you know what I need you to do."

Snape only nodded and left the office.

Dumbledore turned to Barty Crouch Jr. and raised his wand. "Obliviate." He said quietly and then followed the memory modification spell with a light stunner that made the imposter fall unconscious. He looked around the room at everyone who was staring at him and realized he needed to explain. "It's imperative this man not remember who interrogated him or that Severus was here at all."

"Explain 'eadmaster." Mr. Delacour requested.

"Trust me enough tonight to accept it." Dumbledore replied. "I will explain another time. For now we need to get to the maze. I have a feeling one of the judges is about to leave abruptly." He looked back at the unconscious prisoner. "I had hoped to secure him somewhere, but I guess we will have to take him with us. We can turn him over to Aurors .

"Pettigrew needs medical care." Sirius said. "He lost a lot blood cutting his hand off."

"I had forgotten about him." Dumbledore admitted as he looked over at the man in question. "Though it looks like the blood has stopped thanks to your measures and there is definitely no hope in recovering his hand." He started toward the door. "Poppy will be in the hospital wing with Viktor Krum and hopefully Alastor. We shall stop there and you and Remus can keep an eye on Pettigrew."

A very short time later they entered the hospital wing and a blur of blond hair pounced on Harry. Gabrielle and her mother had proceeded immediately to the all familiar medical facility when they realized that's where everyone was headed.

"Arry." Gabrielle cried as she held him tight proving to herself that he physically was still there. He had mentally assured her, but she needed to physically touch him, to hold him, to prove to herself that her bond mate was really alive. Fleur and Hermione both looked at each other and their sister. They both had felt the same thing.

Harry wrapped his arms around Gabrielle and held her tight. "I couldn't leave my angel." He replied. "I have a lot to tell you." Then to all of his bond mates. "All of you, but let's wait for a while."

Poppy was bending over a bed where the real Alastor Moody was lying. He wasn't taking too kindly to her ministrations but she wasn't allowing him to leave. They all could hear various words carrying over the room. "Dehydration, exposure, malnutrition...lucky to be alive." She finally looked up to see who had entered her hospital. Upon seeing Harry she immediately came over and started examining him.

"What happened this time Mr. Potter?" She asked.

"Well I broke my arm but Fleur healed it." He replied.

"It's not Harry." Dumbledore said and nodded toward the levitating body.

Poppy's memory was extremely good and she instantly recognized the two people who were being levitated in an unconscious state. The pain potion vial she was holding crashed to the floor.

"Peter Pettigrew?" She asked. "But he's.." A memory of the previous year emerged and she looked back at Harry. "You weren't confused last year were you? You did seem him."

Harry could only nod.

"So Sirius Black really is..."

"That's not for now Poppy." Dumbledore said. "As you can see Pettigrew is missing his hand. He cut it off during a dark ritual. Though it's been bound could you make sure he doesn't bleed to death. His testimony is critical. Also do not let him regain consciousness at all. He is an animagus and can escape."

By now Remus was standing next to the large black dog. "I'll stay and keep an eye on him sir. I won't let him escape this time."

"Thank you Remus."

Poppy had put wormtail on a bed and was running her wand over his body. "Outside of the hand and severe blood loss, he is ok. A little work to seal the arm and a blood replenishing potion should do the trick." She looked at the group. "I don't suppose you were able to recover the hand?"

"There is no hope in recovering the hand." Dumbledore replied. "That I can assure you."

Poppy looked at the other person who had been levitated into the wing. "Barty Crouch Jr. Another person who is supposed to be dead. What is going on Albus?"

"He is well." Dumbledore replied. "Though he probably is suffering from Polyjuice poisoning. He's been taking it steadily since the school year began."

Poppy ran her wand over the man and gave a gasp when she read the results. "He also is still recovering from long term exposure to the Imperius curse."

"Can I leave him here as well?" Dumbledore asked. "He also should not be allowed to wake anytime soon. His testimony will be important in another matter."

"Certainly." Poppy said and within seconds Crouch was lying in a bed beside Pettigrew. She then turned back to Harry. "Let me look over that arm before you leave." Before Harry could object she was already running her wand over his arm. "Very well done Miss Delacour." She said "No bones missing and perfectly aligned." She looked at Harry's oldest bond mate. "You have a nice touch. Have you considered a career as a Healer?"

"Non, eet's a career Veela are discouraged from pursuing." Fleur responded.

Poppy grimaced. "I guess you might run into issues with male patients. Well if you decide otherwise let me know."

"How is Viktor Krum?" Dumbledore asked.

"He's fine. He is very confused of course. He only remembers entering the maze and not much after that. Definitely he was Imperiused. I had to sedate him to keep him here though. Do you want me to bring him around?"

"Yes. I think if he is back to himself he can join us...." Dumbledore started but stopped as a cold chill started to fill the room. The door burst open and a man with a lime green bowler hat entered followed by two Dementors.

"Dumbledore what is going on?" Fudge asked and then seeing Harry and Fleur. "Why aren't they in the Maze. We have a crowd full of people waiting for the tournament to be over..." he became distracted when the two Dementors that had accompanied him glided past him headed for the hospital bed where Crouch Jr was.

Dumbledore already had his wand out and his Patronus phoenix was encircling one of the Dementors. Harry quickly had a very bright large stag joining the phoenix and the two Dementors were forced back, an otter and an Osprey quickly joined the other two. Finally another female voice could be heard.

"Expecto Patronum." Gabrielle casts pulling her memory of Harry being alive. From the tip of her wand a shape took form and a silver doe appeared and stood next to the Stag.

"I am so jealous." Hermione said to her young bond mate who was looking amazingly at her own Patronus. They both knew she wasn't really jealous but Gabrielle smiled at her.

The Dementors fled the room being chased by the Patronuses.

Cornelius Fudge just looked on like a man in shock but soon recovered. "Now see here Dumbledore, they were providing protection for me. You had no authority to chase them away."

"They were trying to attack a very valuable witness Cornelius."

"Who?"

"Barty Crouch Jr."

"Jr? But...but he's dead." Fudge replied.

"Look over in that bed. Does he look dead?"

"What kind of trickery is this?" Fudge was almost yelling now.

"No trickery." Dumbledore said. "Now do you remember last year when Harry swore that Peter Pettigrew was alive?"

"He had been confunded by Black." Fudge said.

"Are you confunded now Minister?" Harry asked.

"Of course not young man." Fudge snarled.

"Then who is that over in that bed beside Crouch?"

Fudge looked where Harry was pointing and recognized an older version of the young man who's picture had graced the Daily Prophet many times last year as story upon story was written about Sirius Black and his crimes along with the picture of his victim.

"What kind of sick trick are you trying to pull Dumbledore?" Fudge asked. "Everyone knows Pettigrew died at the hands of Sirius Black. What?" The minister's last word was because a large black dog had just walk behind the minister was currently peeing on his leg. "Get that blasted dog away from me." He yelled as he tried to kick it away. He turned to Dumbledore. "What about the Tournament Dumbledore. I have a very important announcement to make as soon as it's over."

"There are more important things happening tonight than the tournament Minister." Dumbledore explained. "Voldemort has returned. If you.."

"What kind of nonsense is this Dumbledore. You create some kind of trickery that disguises some people to appear like people who are known to be dead and now spouting some kind of nonsense about He-who-must-not-be-named? I'll hear none of this. Now I want everyone back to the pitch so the winner can be sorted out. I have too many other important things to be doing than listening to such nonsense."

"I'm sorry you feel that way Minister." Dumbledore replied to the back of the minister who was busy trying to do a cleaning charm on his pants leg and leave the hospital wing at the same time. Dumbledore turned to motley crew of people around him. "We need to protect these witnesses to our utmost ability." He said. "Remus you must seal this room when we leave. I will try to get Amelia Bones up here as soon as I can. Once we turn them over to her, I want you to start alerting the old crowd."

Remus nodded his understanding.

Krum had been awakened by then and given a pepper up potion. He made his way to Fleur and Harry. "I vish to apologize. I understand I vas cursed to do things, but..."

"No need." Harry said. "You have a lot to catch up on, but we were all played as fools I think." He help out his hand to Krum who was staring at Hermione's closeness to Harry.

"I never had a chance did I?" He asked her. There was no malice or jealousy in his voice. He was just stating a fact.

"I..I'm sorry Viktor." Hermione said. "I...look can we talk about it later?"

Viktor nodded and took Harry's hand. "I'm not sure vat's going on, but if you hurt her.." He left the rest unsaid.

Harry smiled at the Bulgarian. "Trust me that if I hurt her, you'd have a long line ahead of you. Can you not say anything until we can talk to you properly? If the wrong words got out right now, Hermione could be seriously hurt."

Again Krum nodded and they all left the hospital wing and started the walk to the pitch.

"Who won?"

"Arry did." Fleur replied quickly.

"It's not that important anymore." Harry said. "Besides you never got a fair chance. They should just say there was no winner."

Krum stopped and looked at Harry. "Is it true you can shake off the imperious curse?" He asked.

"I guess." Harry replied. "But how..."

"I mentioned it to him Harry." Hermione replied. "A lot of our conversations ended up about you." she explained.

"I should have realized then." Viktor said to Hermione and then to Harry. "If you had been hit with the same curse as me, you would have been able to get free of it. If you consider it as one additional challenge in the maze, you still would have still von." He smiled at the younger man. "Something I've learned playing Quidditch is never be ashamed of vat allowed you to vin." They turned and started

walking again. As they neared the pitch, Hermione and Fleur moved away from Harry and Gabrielle moved to his side.

"Tomorrow you really must explain." Krum muttered quietly.

Cedric joined then as they neared the judges table where Dumbledore was now whispering to Madam Maxine who was sitting alone. Percy Weasley had stalked away in search of the Minister. Lee Jordan looked on confused and the murmuring started to increase in volume around the stands. Finally Lee came over to the table and asked.

"Where's the cup? I thought the winner was determined by who brought it out?"

Harry looked at Fleur. "Guess we left it didn't we."

"Eet never crossed my mind."

Fudge had joined the conversation. "Where is the cup Dumbledore?" He asked. "How can we have winner without the cup?"

"I can assure you and the other champions will attest that Harry Potter was the first to touch the cup and won the Tournament." Fudge looked around at the Champions who were nodding. He shook his head and said "The rules clearly state who brings the cup out of the..." The rest wasn't finished as a disturbance occurred right next to them.

****E E****

Lucius Malfoy and his band of Death Eaters had entered the graveyard quickly. They banished the giant cauldron and repaired the tombstones that had been damaged. They cleaned up the blood that had been spilled. Shortly after arriving one of them found the dead body of Nagini.

"My master is not going to be happy when he learns of this." Lucius thought as he dreaded returning to his own Manor and telling Voldemort about the death of his snake. Lucius conjured a bag and gently placed the body and head of the large snake into it and was ready to return to his Master when he saw moonlight reflecting off of

something that appeared to be silver. He walked over and found the Triwizard cup laying on the ground. Voldemort had told them about using the cup to capture Harry Potter.

"My master might want this." He thought as he reached down to pick it up. As his hand touched the cup he could feel the familiar tug of a portkey and he disappeared into the night.

****E E****

Dumbledore, Madam Maxine, Minister Fudge, Lee Jordan and the Champions all found themselves looking at a black robed silver masked person laying on the ground holding the Triwizard cup. Dumbledore's wand was out in an instant as he recognized the garb of a Death Eater. A silent stunning spell quickly hit the person.

Dumbledore reached down and removed the mask of the robed individual. As the noise of the people nearest to them rose in volume, he looked back at Minister Fudge. "Well if you would like to name Lucius Malfoy the winner, you can."

A/N - About Gabrielle's Patronus. Fleur and Hermione are both very independent people. Gabrielle is not so independent. Her fascination with Harry and then bonding with him almost immediately after her maturation means she hasn't had much else but Harry to define her happiness.

Chapter 29

"WHAT ARE YOU UP TO DUMBLEDORE!" Fudge screamed as his face turned the same putrid red Harry had seen Vernon Dursley turn many times. "Using this event to make me look foolish. You knew I was going to make an important departmental announcement after it was over."

"Cornelius, I assure yo.." Dumbledore started but was immediately cut off.

"We are going to find out who your friend is here." Fudge snarled. He turned to Percy Weasley and said "You Weasley or whoever you are, go find Undersecretary Umbridge and have her report to me at once. Then find Director Bones. Tell her I want her to bring a supply of Veritaserum and get here as quickly as possible."

"Yes sir. Senior Undersecretary Umbridge and Directors Bones, yes sir. I won't let you down sir." Percy replied and scurried away.

"Corne.." Dumbledore tried again.

"I know what you're trying to do and I won't stand for it." Fudge declared loudly. "You want to start some preposterous story about You-Know-Who's returning and make everyone frightened. You expect them to flock to you and make you the next Minister. I should have seen it earlier. All that garbage about that muggle and that Jorkins woman being in these imaginary places you keep saying You-Know-Who ran off too." Fudge continued to rant over the next few minutes while Dumbledore kept trying to break in on the Minister's ramblings.

"That's not..He is..Listen.." The Headmaster tried again and again to interrupt the Minister.

"Well it's not going to work Albus." The Minister came down from a massive tirade and was about to start again when. "Ah Dolores." A toad like woman with a pink bow in her hair appeared at Fudge's side.

"What's going on Minister?" Umbridge asked in a high girlish voice that seemed mismatched to her squat appearance.

"Dumbledore has some crackpot scheme going tonight." Fudge said to his undersecretary. "He's got people pretending to be Death Eaters and making a fuss about You-Know-Who returning." He kicked the black robed body still lying stunned at his feet. "He even had someone impersonating Lucius Malfoy appear clutching the Triwizard cup."

Dolores Umbridge smiled in a fashion that made Harry think of a predator swooping down on a prey. "Ah yes, it seems he didn't know you had planned a meeting with Mr. Malfoy right after this event did he?"

Fudge also smiled at Dumbledore. "You might make someone look like Lucius, Dumbledore, but we shall really... Madam Bones excellent. Glad you could get here so quickly."

Amelia Bones, the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement arrived at that time. She was a broad bodied lady with short grey hair and thick eyebrows. A monocle dangled on a chain that bounced upon her bosom as she strolled up to the judges table. "That young man, Arthur Weasley's son said you needed to see me urgently Minister?"

"Amelia." Fudge started in his oily voice. "I want this impostor questioned immediately." He said indicating the man on the ground at his feet.

Madam Bones attention swept to the blond man in black robes laying on the ground at their feet as she raised the monocle to her eye. "Impostor? But it appears to be Lucius Malfoy."

"Exactly." Fudge exclaimed. "This is some kind of stunt by Dumbledore to embarrass myself and the Ministry not to mention my friend Lucius."

"And you're absolutely certain it's not Mr. Malfoy?"

"Absolutely. He and I are meeting later this evening to discuss a few..well to discuss things." Cornelius explained. "Obviously Dumbledore has someone polyjuiced or glamoured as Lucius to try to discredit me in front of everyone. He also has two others up in the medical wing. Claiming they are Peter Pettigrew and Barty Crouch Jr. He's throwing around some ridiculous claim that You-Know-Who

has returned." Fudge sneered at Dumbledore before turning back to Bones. "Bring every Auror you have here and find out who those impostors are by any means necessary. I want this ridiculous scheme stamped out immediately. Make sure the Prophet knows about it as well. I don't want people panicking tomorrow if these rumors of Dumbledore's get out."

"You really..."Dumbledore tried one more time.

"I want that report on my desk first thing in the morning Director Bones." Fudge said to Amelia as he pointedly ignored Dumbledore. He turned to stalk away and then remembered something he turned back to the people around him. "Everyone here still thinks Harry Potter won this event?"

Every one of the Champions, still stunned by the actions of the Minister of Magic just nodded.

"Very well." Fudge replied. He bent down and snatched the cup from the hand of Lucius Malfoy. He also pulled out a large bag from his robes. He handed the Triwizard cup and the bag to Harry. "Here are your winnings and Cup Potter." He said briskly. "Goodnight. I have an appointment with my friend Lucius."

Dolores was eying Madam Maxine with unsuppressed disgust. "Minister, maybe I should accompany you this evening. It would be," She turned her gaze toward Dumbledore, "prudent, to provide multiple witnesses that Mr. Malfoy is in fact at home."

"Excellent idea Dolores." Fudge replied and again he turned to Madam Bones. "First thing in the morning." He repeated as he slammed his lime green bowler on his head and stalked off with Dolores Umbridge following behind him.

"Yes Minister." She replied to the back of the Minister.

"Dumbledore." Madam Maxine started. "What is going on zis evening. Karkaroff left several minutes ago clutching 'is arm and now all of zis."

"It's a long tale Olympe." Dumbledore replied. "Let me discuss it with Madam Bones and then I'll be glad to bring you up to date."

Lee Jordan looked around in stunned confusion. Finally deciding that the Champion had been named he did what he was suppose to do, he amplified his voice and lifted Harry's arm up in the air. "I give you the winner of the Triwizard Tournament. Hogwarts's own Harry Potter." He announced. "And coming in second place was..." He looked quizzically at the rest of the champions and Cedric pointed to Fleur. Lee pulled her over and lifted her arm. "The Beauxbaton Champion, Fleur Delacour." He looked back over at Cedric and Viktor and watched Viktor push Cedric toward him. "In third place was the other Hogwarts's champion, Cedric Diggory. And finally giving his best effort this evening was Viktor Krum."

As the crowd erupted in cheers, Harry turned to Dumbledore. "Sir, do you need me for anything else? I just want to go to bed."

Dumbledore turned to Amelia Bones. "Amelia can you hold off questioning Harry and the other Champions until tomorrow?"

"Albus, I have no idea what is going on actually. Does Mr. Potter have testimony that will be relevant to this evening?"

Dumbledore took her gently by the arm and led her a little away from the listening ears around them. "Amelia, he has everything to do with this evening and I..." He started to explain what had happened over the last several hours. Harry, his bondmates, other champions and the rest of the people who had participated in the past watched as the face of the Director of Magical Law Enforcement evolved through various emotions until the story ended.

"I can understand why Minister Fudge considered that story to be unbelievable Albus. I find it rather hard to accept it myself." she finally said.

"I would imagine so." Dumbledore replied. "None the less it is true. I only ask you keep an open mind as you interview each of the people that the minister claims to be impostors. Each have a fascinating tale to tell."

Amelia turned back to Harry and the others. "It will be at least several hours before I can be ready for your interviews." she admitted. "I want more of the background information before I determine what questions need to be asked of you Mr. Potter and the other champions along with anyone else who had something to

do with this evening. I would like all of your wands, and I ask that none of you leave Hogwarts this evening. When notified, I expect you to present yourselves as quickly as possible."

"Yes ma'am." Harry replied as he handed over his wand while Hermione, Gabrielle and Fleur did likewise. Viktor started patting his robes, then Cedric remembered he had Viktor's wand as well. "Sorry, here are mine and Krums'."

Madam Bones thick eyebrow rose at that statement. "You'll understand shortly Amelia." Dumbledore replied.

"Ma'am, sir." Fleur said. "When you do need us just send Dobby. 'E'll know where to find us." She took Harry by the hand and pulled him after her. Gabrielle and Hermione were only a step behind. The women had been in a conversation and none of them were planning on leaving Harry's side that night.

"Unfortunately I must return to Paris zis evening to discuss ze events with my own Minister Madam Bones." Alain Delacour said. "I will make myself available for questioning tomorrow morning."

Amelia Bones realized immediately who she had just spoken. "Minister Delacour? You were part of this?"

"Oui, it 'as been a long and eventful night. As I said, I will be at your disposal tomorrow to give you any information you need."

"Yes of course, thank you sir." She said. "May I ask if you concur with Albus on what has occurred this evening?"

"I personally saw Voldemort zis evening Madam if zat is what you mean." He replied. "I participated in a battle against 'im when 'e tried to kill my daughter."

The director of the Magical Law Enforcement division nodded her head. "Very well Minister. Please let me know when you return tomorrow."

"Zank you. I shall." Alain replied and moved toward his wife.

Apolline had wanted a chance to talk to her daughters. Her eldest daughter had been almost killed twice in the last two hours while she

and her younger sister had suffered through what they had thought was the death of their bondmate. She wanted to hold and comfort them, but could only watch as they walked away. She looked over at her husband who read her face instantly.

"Demain ma femme. We shall talk to zem tomorrow. Tonight is zeirs." He said. "Now I must communicate what 'as 'appened to Pierre. I'm sure 'e will want to start working on plans for our country's response to zis. Eet will be best if ze French Minister is fully briefed before morning."

Apolline looked one more time as her daughters and their bond mate walked away. She took her husband's arm and said. "I shall join you. I do not wish to stay 'ere tonight." She gave his arm a more firm squeeze. "Alain, you could have been killed as well."

He once again revisited the graveyard in his mind. He watched in horror as Voldemort had tried to kill his daughter though because she had been disillusioned he hadn't known that at the time, but now looking back it made it all the worst. He could see a young man he now considered his son, move faster than he could even think into the path of the light while calling out his daughter's name. He looked into his wife's beautiful blue eyes. "Oui, it was possible, but I could not sit back and do nozing when my daughter was risking 'er life for 'er mate."

"I know Alain. You were very brave."

"Non, I did what I must, but tonight I did see bravery. I watched a young man willing to give 'is life for our daughter wizout a moment of 'esitation. Eet is a memory you must decide if you wish to live zrough. Eet is both 'orrifying and amazing." His eyes also had turned to the four young people walking toward the castle. "E truly loves our daughters." He looked back at his wife. "Remember when we saw ze young man in the medical wing after our daughters started ze bond and we wondered 'ow 'e could even take care of 'imself?" Alain Delacour had to shake his head at that recollection. "Even wiz all ze tales zat we 'eard about 'im, eet all pales in comparison to what I saw zis evening Apolline."

"E is a special young man isn't 'e?"

"Oui, 'e is very special indeed and I will do what I must to protect and 'elp im."

"Ow did 'e live?" Apolline asked.

"Je ne sais pas. Perhaps ze 'Ogwarts 'Eadmaster might know ze answer." He looked over at Dumbledore who was leading the grey haired lady with the monocle toward the castle while levitating the unconscious form of Lucius Malfoy beside him. "I will ask 'im tomorrow. Zere are a lot of questions 'e will need to answer tomorrow."

"Let's go to Paris so you can brief Pierre and zen we can get a good night sleep ourselves." She let go of his arm and wrap her arm around his waist. She had her own fears to quell that evening about her own brave husband.

"Yes of course." Alain replied and his arm went around her slender body as they walked toward the gates leading out of Hogwarts.

** E E **

Fred and George caught up the bondmates before they made it to the castle.

"Great job Harry. You too Fleur." Fred said.

"We've got the supplies ready for the party. Butterbeer, cakes and even a bit of firewhiskey. It's starting in the common room in just a few minutes." George chipped in.

"First and second place between the two of you." Fred continued.

"Though we expected nothing less."

"Don't guys." Harry replied and then seeing the surprised look on the Twin's faces he explained. "Look, a lot happened tonight that you don't know about. Voldemort's.." He stopped when both of the twins cringed. "Stop it guys, it's just a name. VOL DE MORT! He's back. He has a body. He...he.." Harry realized he didn't feel like talking about it. "Can we talk about it tomorrow. I really don't feel like a party knowing that the man who killed my parents and has been trying to kill me for years is back alive."

"You-Know-Who?" George asked.

"Back?" Fred said. "Please tell us this a sick joke you're pulling Harry."

"Eet's not." Fleur said firmly. "E's back and we've seen 'im. 'E tried to kill us." She could still see the green light that had came toward her, and Harry leaping in front of it. She could still feel the horror, shock and despair that had followed as she watched him collapse in front of her. " We'll talk about eet tomorrow, but tonight we need sleep and to recover."

"Tried to kill you?" Fred asked.

"He was in the maze?"

"Non, but eet is a long story and we are very tired zough. We promise we will tell you tomorrow." Fleur replied.

"We understand." George said as he watched Harry and his bondmates start toward the castle again.

Harry had only walked a few steps when he stopped and turned around. He offered the Triwizard cup to the twins. "Here. Put this in the common room. It'll let them think we've been there at least." He turned and started walking again.

The twins looked at the cup and saw the bag that was in it. "Harry. Hey Harry."

"Yeah?" Harry responded as he stopped again.

"Your winnings are in here."

"Keep it." Harry replied waving his hand dismissively. He looked at his bondmates and then back at the twins. "Use it for that joke shop of yours...or whatever. I really don't care."

"But we can't..."

"Then give it to Ron or Ginny or Peeves for all care." Harry replied testily before settling down. "Look guys I really don't want it, so take

it. Go make a few people laugh." He then smiled tiredly. "Just not at our expense."

Fred looked at George and they both looked at the bag of Galleons before answering. "Thanks Harry. We didn't want to mention it, but Bagman owed too much to the Goblins, The Prophet's solicitor said it's unlikely we'll ever collect anything."

"Glad to help guys, but we really are tired." He turned back toward the castle and started walking again.

As the continued on, Hermione remembered something and stopped. "Wait, we need to talk to Skeeter." she said. "She was with us in the graveyard, and she has to know about Sirius and something about our bond."

"Sirius?" Harry replied. "Why didn't you say something earlier?"

"I thought you saw Harry." Hermione replied. "It was the bug I removed from Moony in Professor Dumbledore's office."

"I wasn't really paying attention." Harry replied. All he really wanted to do was crawl into bed and sleep for several days but he knew this was something that had to be done. "Ok, we'll go warn Sirius and then talk to her."

"Non." Gabrielle said. "You and Fleur go on to bed. I will go warn Sirius. 'Ermione, you go talk to Skeeter. We'll meet in ze room as soon as we can."

"NO!" Harry replied forcefully. "I will not let any of you out of my sight tonight."

"But.." Hermione started.

"No Hermione. We stick together." Harry reiterated. "We know there are Death Eaters out there with children in here. We saw those mirrors Sirius and Remus have. What if one of the Death Eaters have something similar and get word to someone in the Castle. Tonight we stick together."

"I..I didn't think of that Harry." She admitted.

"I agree with 'Arry." Fleur said. "We'll all go. Eet won't take long."

They met Remus and Padfoot shortly before they arrived at the medical wing.

"Dumbledore thought it might be best if Padfoot and I go visit some old friends while the investigation is ongoing." Remus explained. "If Peter happens to mention things about a large black dog...well we want to wait for a clear path before making your godfather's presence known."

"We were coming to warn you about something similar." Harry replied. "We think Rita Skeeter knows about your form Padfoot."

A low growl emerged from the black dog before Remus spoke up again. "Why do you think that."

"Remember what I took off your shoulder in Dumbledore's office?"

"A Bee.. Skeeter? She was with us?"

"Looks that way." Hermione replied.

Remus turned to Sirius. "She can't break the story until morning so we should be fine for the next several hours. Let's go do what Dumbledore needed us to do. Then I have to return for my questioning in a couple of hours."

"Madam Bones is letting you leave?" Harry asked. "She told all of us we couldn't leave Hogwarts."

"She said something similar to me as well." Remus replied grining. "And I'm sure there are Aurors at the gates that might have a problem with me leaving, but then again who needs gates when you know every secret tunnel out of the Castle."

Harry and his bondmates all laughed a tired laugh.

"I'll see you tomorrow Harry." Remus said finally. "Go get some sleep. It looks like you desperately need it."

"We will as soon as we have a word with Rita." Hermione said. "I told her to meet us shortly."

When they left Remus and Sirius they quickly made their way to the tree and found Rita standing next to it.

"Mr Potter." Rita said when she saw them. "Oh this is going to be wonderful. What is your secret? How did you survive that killing curse? Did you feel any strange magic when it happened? Are you in pain? Did it leave another scar?"

"We're not here to talk about that right now Rita." Hermione replied sharply. "Let's talk about what you're going to write tomorrow."

"Everything of course. You-Know-Who is back." she replied. "That will, of course be the headline, then there's Sirius Black story. No wonder you thought of animagus when it came to be. You already knew one. Then there's the Barty Crouch Jr. thing. Was he really here all year under Dumbledore's nose?" Skeeter was almost giddy. "That is going to be a fun story. Then of course there's you Harry. Surviving another killing curse from He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and actually injuring him."

"Look, can we get you to lay off the Harry and Sirius for a day if not longer?"

"But you said I could publish anything that was the truth and all of what happened tonight is the truth. Oh that reminds me, how did you ladies know what was happening with Harry this evening?"

Fleur sighed tiredly. "As you can imagine we are all tired." she started as she ignore the reporter's last question. "You 'ave plenty wiz just Voldemort returning and ze battle in ze graveyard for tomorrow's stories." She mentally chatted with Harry for a few seconds before continuing. "Go ahead and write what you saw about 'arry. And you can start laying ze story on Sirius by mentioning ze capture of Pettigrew. Ze story about 'im is, 'e faked 'is own death and framed Sirius by blowing up zat street wiz all ze muggles. 'E lived as a rat, 'e is also an animagus, until last year. If you don't write about seeing Sirius earlier, we'll get zat interview for you in ze next two days."

"I want the exclusive interview with you Harry as well." Rita replied. "Your side of everything."

"It's for Sirius Harry. Besides, better her writing what you tell her, than for her to make things up." Hermione said quickly to Harry.

Harry sighed as he looked at the reporter. " Ok, you include that apology to Hermione within the next two days and publish the facts concerning Sirius Black's trial and I'll answer your questions. Though I will have people with me to help." Harry replied.

It did not take Rita long to determine an exclusive interview with Harry Potter following his surviving a second killing curse was worth a million apologies. Her eyes looked over at Hermione. "I'll even let you write the apology yourself for that interview."

"I appreciate that offer, but I think it needs to be in your words." Hermione replied.

Rita sniffed. "Very well. I'll work on that after the stories tonight."

"Now if there's..."

"Tell 'er about ze man who 'ad ze cup." Gabrielle said. "She might 'ave missed it."

"Thanks angel." Harry replied and finished the sentence he had started to Rita, "There is one more thing. Lucius Malfoy appeared in full Death Eater mask and robes at the Judge's table holding the Triwizard cup. The cup was how I was originally kidnapped and taken to that graveyard. He is now in the custody of the MLE."

Rita's eyebrows shot up at that bit of news. "With the way things happen around you Mr. Potter, I think I'll enjoy our little tit for tat. I'll go check on that immediately. Thank you."

"Now if there's nothing else," Harry said. "I really really want to sleep."

They quickly finalized things with Rita and within minutes the four of them were on the seventh floor of the castle. They all knew where they were going.

The room of requirements provided exactly what they needed. A room with a large enough bed for four people sleep comfortably. A

bathroom with a water closet attached. Dobby was called to see if he could get them their night clothes and after a shower by each of them, they climbed into bed. Neither Hermione or Gabrielle thought anything of Harry pulling Fleur toward him that night and wrapped his arms around her. Hermione climbed into bed behind Harry and wrapped her arms around him. The bed was large enough for Gabrielle to stretch out above them. Harry fell asleep with Gabrielle running her fingers gently through his unruly hair while Hermione held him tight. Fleur sunk into her slumber with Harry's arm around her. Though each had expected to succumb to nightmares of they had experienced, they only dreamed that they had been of each other.

E E

Draco Malfoy was the most miserable person at Hogwarts. Serving one of his last days of detention, he had already been told what he had to do. As soon as the winner was announced, he and Hagrid would enter the maze to start cleaning it up. Hagrid would take care of the various monsters and other beings while Draco would follow closely behind with shovel and a pail to clean up anything else. He was not close enough to the judge's table to see his father appear, but when he heard Harry Potter had won, he broke the handle on his shovel in anger. Hagrid looked at him and said.

"There be no replace'n it. You has to work wi what ya have."

Draco knew he couldn't even repair it. Hagrid had his wand to make sure he didn't clean up the messes the easy way.

Hagrid yanked the hedges completely out of the ground and tossed them aside as he walked into the maze. Eventually they came across the remains of the blast ended skrewt. While Draco started scooping up the pieces that were blasted off the beast, Hagrid took out his tablecloth sized handkerchief and started sobbing into it. "It was like me own child." He blubbered.

As Draco cleaned up the mess he didn't see the vine of Devil's snare untangle from the hedges and snake its way toward one of his feet. Though when it wrapped around his ankle he let out a very high pitch scream of terror. After Hagrid came and untied the ferret, he said. "I woulda said you scream like a girly, but then I'd be insulting too many fine women, I would."

All night it continued. The sphinx had already departed by it's own magical powers. Hagrid once again broke down and cried when he saw the remains of the Acromantula. He knew he'd have to take the body back to Aragog and explain to his friend how one of his children came to die in the maze.

Draco finished his duties at a quarter past four am. He was covered in blood and various other body fluids and solids. As he left the maze his only thoughts was how much he hated Harry Potter. He planned a long letter to his father to tell him how things were.

** E E **

The screams of Gregory Goyle Sr. still echoed in the den of Malfoy Manor when Voldemort lifted the Cruciatus Curse from the Deatheater. Goyle had been the unfortunate one to inform Voldemort that Malfoy had disappeared from the Graveyard. He looked around at his other followers who had left with Malfoy to clean up the graveyard.

"None of you saw what happened to him either?" He asked them.

"No My lord." Nott replied. "He...he was gathering the body of your..." All of a sudden Nott's muscle's tensed as he knew the next words he uttered was going to bring pain, but anything less to his master would bring death. "We found the snake you had mentioned my lord and it was dead." The pain was intense and though the pain ended rather swiftly compared to some of the punishments doled out by Voldemort, Nott could still taste the metallic taste of blood that seeped from his tongue where he had bitten it. He swallowed the blood in his mouth before continuing. "Lucius was..." Nott continued trying to get the rest out and disappear into the pack of Deatheaters and not be singled out again. "He was securing the snake's body and then he wasn't there a few seconds later." Nott tensed expecting to be cursed again and silently thought how fortunate he was when he was allowed to move away.

"Was there anyone else in the graveyard?" Riddle asked.

"No my Lord." Nott replied. "Lucius himself did the detection spell."

"And no sign of he was captured and apparated away?"

"No my lord. There was no sounds."

"So Lucius might have run away?" Voldemort asked. "did you try another detection spell once you saw he was gone."

Nott tensed again as he expected more pain as he answered. "No my Lord. We didn't..."

Voldemort rose from his chair and started to pace the floor. "I cannot stay here." He said finally. "Though it's more likely he is running, I can not take a chance he didn't go the Ministry."

"My lord." A female voice spoke quietly.

"Yes Narcissa." Voldemort hissed to her. "Do you have something to say about your husband."

"Yes my lord." Narcissa Malfoy swallowed nervously. "Lucius would not have run my lord. He...I mean there must be another explanation. Maybe Dumbledore knew you'd send someone there and left a portkey trap."

"Yes." Voldemort replied finally after thinking about her statement. "That is a definite possibility." He continued to pace as he thought of all that had gone wrong in the last few hours. A year ago in the forest of Albania he had put in motion a perfectly laid plan that would have him with a new body made from the blood of Harry Potter. One that would allow him to kill the boy-who-lived. "Or so it should have." Voldemort thought. "Wormtail must have botched the ritual somehow." Voldemort had planned to put to rest any doubt from his followers of his powers. He had planned on showing them that the night so many years ago was just a simple miscalculation on his part. Voldemort's plan had called for him to raise his power secretly while the great Albus Dumbledore search the world for the Boy-Who-lived. "But something went wrong tonight. He thought. His thoughts returned to the thin black haired boy that had once again survived his killing curse. "I have to know what the rest of the Prophecy says." Before too long though, his thoughts returned to the last thing to go wrong and he stopped. "McNair, I can not take chances. If you get a chance Lucius is also to be killed."

"No, please no." Narcissa cried out as she looked on in abject terror. "My lord please. Let me go to him. If he was captured we have friends in high places. I can...I'll find a way my lord."

Voldemort studied the blond witch as he thought about her request. He had allowed a follower to convince him to not kill someone many years ago and that had led to what had occurred that night with Harry Potter so he definitely would not allow a repeat of that. "If Lucius did leave on his own, he must die, but if he was trapped and has been captured and she can get Lucius freed, his resources and connections could still be useful." Finally he said in a cold high voice. "Go..find your husband. But if he betrayed me, you both will die."

Narcissa paled even more but she nodded and quickly left the room.

Voldemort turned to look at the rest of the Death Eaters present finally he spoke. "Go back home this evening. I will call for my loyal followers again soon." With a wave of his wand the wards disappeared from the house. One by one the Death Eaters disappeared away. Voldemort was the last to leave.

** E E **

Minister Fudge and Dolores Umbridge waited for ten minutes at the door of Malfoy Manor. Finally they had admit that the Malfoys were not home. They returned to their office to plan for the upcoming day and their attack on Dumbledore.

** E E **

Amelia Bones sat at her makeshift desk in a deserted classroom near the hospital wing. Two bottles of pepper up potions sat empty on her desk. A massive headache had started recently and she knew it would not get better until she had a good night sleep, but she also knew sleep was still a long time away. She looked down at her notes from the interviews she had conducted. Outside of sending twenty Aurors to Malfoy Manor after the brief questioning of Lucius Malfoy only to find it empty, she really didn't know where to begin. Everything she had heard this evening was going to cause multiple political bombshells. She sighed and looked over at one of the Aurors guarding her door. She recognized the young lady of course. The pink hair that she wore most of time made her stand out.

"Auror Tonks, please have Harry Potter and the other Champions brought for questioning." she said. "I was told that a house-elf named Dobby could find them the easiest."

"Yes ma'am." The pink haired Auror replied and left the room after stumbling on an unseen crack in the floor.

** E E **

Harry awoke to a gentle voice. "Harry Potter must awake sir. He must awake. Harry Potter is needed by the Headmaster."

Harry opened his eyes and found his face buried in a sea of blond hair. He couldn't tell immediately if it was Fleur or Gabrielle he was holding in his arms. He then realized what his right hand was cupping and knew immediately it was Fleur. Gabrielle wasn't so developed yet. As he started to move his hand he heard, "Leave it. I like ze way it feels for you to 'old me so intimately. Especially after last night."

The phrase 'last night', immediately brought Harry fully awake as the the memories of the previous evening came crashing down. He sat upright immediately and looked around. He saw the fuzzy outline of Dobby still trying to get his attention.

"Harry Potter is needed sir." He was saying. "Harry Potter and his bondmates is asked to come see Dumbledore."

"Ok Dobby." Harry replied. "In his office?"

"Ye sir Harry Potter sir." Dobby replied.

"Thanks Dobby give us a few minutes and we'll be ready." Harry said and then a murmur, "Where are my glasses." Two seconds later they were floating in front of him.

"Dobby got your glasses sir. Harry Potter must hurry though."

Five minutes later four sleepy grumpy young people made their way toward the Headmaster's office. When they arrived they found Remus and Sirius already there.

"I'm sorry to bring all of you here so early." Dumbledore said. "Amelia Bones is wanting to interview you Harry as well as the rest of you and I wanted to quickly tell you what's going on before you go. Fortunately she does believe what happened. But that also means she is pursuing how Voldemort returned to life and I would appreciate it if you would continue to keep her in the dark concerning Horcruxes."

"What if she gives me that truth serum?"

"It shouldn't come to that, but if it does, I will try to be in the room and help guide the questions." Dumbledore replied.

"Then we'll try." Harry replied. "But I want to speak to you afterwards specifically on that subject along with a lot of things."

"Of course." Dumbledore replied more calmly than he felt. "Shall I escort you down to her temporary office?"

Harry's interview was first and he told everything he knew that had occurred including working with Fleur in the third task, Viktor attacking them, Viktor attacking Cedric, the cup being a portkey and what he knew happened in the graveyard.

Amelia Bones sat back and considered the young man in front of her. She had several things that didn't make sense. "Mr. Potter there is one thing that Dumbledore refused to answer and that is how he knew you were in trouble and where you were. Can you enlighten me on that subject."

Harry contemplated the woman in front of him for a few seconds before speaking. "Ma'am, Professor Dumbledore was keeping a secret that I hope you will also."

"What type of secret Mr. Potter?" She asked. "Because my job is what it is, I can't promise keeping any information secret."

"We understand." Harry said. "But it's..it's personal and it's not illegal so we ask that you not tell anyone." He sighed. "Madam Bones can you pick a number between one and a hundred please."

"Why?" She asked curiously.

"It's easier to show than to just tell you."

Amelia shrugged and said, "eighty-two."

Almost immediately there was a knock on the door.

"Yes?" Amelia asked.

The door opened and the young pink haired Auror stuck her head in. "Ma'am. The Beauxbaton Champion asked me to tell you 'eighty-two'. She said you'd know what it meant."

Amelia turned and her gaze locked on Harry for several seconds before she then turned back to Tonks and said. "Please have her step in here for a moment please."

"Have Hermione Granger and Fleur's sister come in as well Ma'am." Harry said. "We..just have them come in and we'll explain."

Ten minutes later Amelia's headache had grown twice the size it had been as she tried to figure out how not to include that information in her report.

As they were leaving Harry had one question to ask. "Director Bones, what happened to Mr. Malfoy?"

"That is none of your concern Mr. Potter." She replied.

"I just have a friend who almost died because of him." Harry explained. "It would be nice to tell her he's locked up for good."

"Do have any proof of that allegation?"

Harry thought back to his confrontation of Lucius Malfoy at that time. "A house-elf will tell you what he said."

"A House-elf?" Amelia replied. "Mr. Potter, it's been a very long night so I've lost my ability to niceties, so unless you can offer real proof, please don't provide groundless accusations."

Harry's temper rose as he felt like Dobby had been insulted and he was about to reply sarcastically when he felt all of his bond mates

calming him down. Fleur finally said. "Arry, a 'ouse-elf can be told to say anyzing and zey will. Zey can not provide legal proof."

Harry sighed. "I'm sorry ma'am. I am still trying to understand the magical world."

Amelia looked at the young man for several seconds. "Unfortunately your friend and most likely yourself will be very disappointed. Mr. Malfoy was released. There was very little to charge him with."

"RELEASED! VERY LITTLE!" Nothing could stop Harry's explosion this time. The yell brought Auror Tonks through the door instantly with her wand raised. "HE'S A BLOODY DEATH EATER!. His son all but admitted that he was part of the thing at the World Cup."

"Mr. Potter you will calm down or I will have you removed." Amelia replied with a very sharp gaze. "Now tell me exactly what I should have charged him with? Dressing up as a Death Eater? Unfortunately that is not against the law. Portkeying with the Triwizard cup? You are the one who left it where it was." Harry felt his temper give way under her firm gaze. Finally she spoke again. "I will tell you what I expect your Headmaster will share with you later. Lucius Malfoy was administered Veritaserum and here is what was discovered. Yes he was indeed Lucius Malfoy. Yes he is a marked Death Eater."

Harry's eyes shot up in question.

"He was marked before you caused the downfall of the Dark Lord Potter." She explained. "Whether he was imperious or not when he took the mark, he has already been cleared of all of the charges from that time. The mark isn't something that will go away so I can't charge him for something he has already been tried for."

"But.." Harry sputtered. "What if new evidence is presented. I mean if he confessed to everything under veritaserum."

"It would not matter. He was tried and cleared of those charges." Amelia explained.

"I'll explain ze importance of zat law to 'im later Madam Bones." Fleur said.

"Thank you Miss Delacour." Amelia replied. "Is your father going to be back soon?"

"I..I didn't know 'e 'ad left." Fleur replied. "I 'aven't seen 'im since last night."

"That's fine. I understand especially now that I understand your relationship with...well all of you." Madam Bones replied. She turned back to Harry. "What I did find out from Lucius Malfoy is this; He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named went to Malfoy Manor last night after the fight you had in the graveyard. Lucius and his wife provided Robes and Medical supplies. Lucius was then sent to the Graveyard to clear up evidence. That is the only charge I have him own. Tampering with evidence. Even that will probably not stick since the only evidence he tampered with was the snake and he brought it to us."

"So...he's going to walk free?"

"Again I ask you Mr. Potter, what can I charge him with? He confessed under Veritaserum that he did not invite the Dark Lord into his house. I might be able to charge him with aiding a known criminal, but to tell you the truth it would not hold up. ANYONE would give Voldemort that kind of support if he showed up in their home and demanded it. He would kill them if they didn't."

"What about the World Cup and...and the Diary." Harry asked.

"I had no reason to ask Mr. Malfoy about any actions at the World Cup." Amelia Bones replied. "Did you report this suspicion to anybody?"

"We.." Harry started to reply that they did mention it to Ron's dad, but didn't want to get him in more trouble if he failed to mention it to the proper people afterwards. "No." He continued dejectedly.

"Well how would the MLE know about it then? As for a diary, I don't know anything about a diary either." Amelia replied.

Harry realized he was getting dangerously close to mentioning Horcruxes and Dumbledore had specifically said not too. "It's not important."

"Very well Mr. Potter. You may have these back now." She handed their wands back to them.

'Thank you.'

Even with her ever growing headache she could still feel sorry for the young man. "Mr. Potter, I will tell you that Mr. Malfoy will be kept under surveillance. We fully know what he is now."

Harry's anger still hadn't abated at breakfast. Though Fleur and Hermione had explained why Lucius Malfoy could not be charged with the crimes he had been cleared of previously even when new evidence was brought forth. The turning point in the morning occurred when the Owls delivered the mail and the daily prophets. Each of them were delivered them own copy.

As they unfurled the newspaper the read in very large letters taking up most of the top of the part of the front page.

THE DARK LORD HAS RETURNED!

by Rita Skeeter

Yes, dear readers, as shocking as this is, it is the truth. When the third task of the Triwizard Tournament was being held, your reporter was as always at the front lines watching the best and brightest of three of the finest schools navigate a magical maze that was designed to test the limits of their magical prowess and knowledge. As you no doubt know, the champions entered the maze in order of the points that they had garnered and their standing in relation to each other.

First to enter, unsurprisingly, were the two Champions from our very own Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry Potter and Cedric Diggory. Both of them had performed exemplarily in the first two tasks and truly deserved their spots as the first two. It is a further testament to the education received and the competency of the teachers at Hogwarts that a fourth year had managed to come up on top despite overwhelming odds in the form of older and more experienced competitors. Next in was the vivacious Fleur Delacour from Beauxbatons Academy of Magic while last to enter the maze was the Durmstrang's champion and Bulgaria's star seeker, Viktor Krum.

Though this reporter does not have a definitive idea of what exactly the challenges the Champions faced, rumors include such as Sphinxes, Boggarts, Acromantula and magical traps. Unfortunately due to the Ministry ineptitude this reporter and all other spectators were forced to watch twenty foot high hedges and only wonder what was happening. As I waited, my attention was drawn to our very own headmaster and judge for the tournament, Albus Dumbledore as I noticed two lovely young witches, one Hermione Jean Granger of Hogwarts and Gabrielle Delacour of Beauxbatons ask to speak to him. This was doubly interesting as the former was known to be the best friends of Harry Potter while the latter was also the youngest Hogwarts Champion's girlfriend as well as the younger sister of the Beauxbatons champion.

Things took an even more interesting turn when, after a few minutes the headmaster had left, his phoenix familiar appeared and transported the two young witches to the headmaster's office where other members of the staff were seen moving towards. Knowing that something had definitely gone wrong, your intrepid reporter followed them where she heard possibly the last few words she ever thought she would hear coming out from the venerable headmaster's mouth; "Harry has been taken by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and we are trying to find a way to get to him."

This simple, calmly stated sentence was met by a shocked silence. Personally, I did not believe my ears as everybody knew that He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named had been defeated by Harry Potter all those years ago. Naturally suspicious and a little sceptical, your reporter accompanied them unnoticed to a graveyard in Little Hangleton where it was said that our young Saviour was being held.

My earlier scepticism quickly changed to shocked horror at seeing the monstrosity that was He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named rise from the cauldron thanks to what was now unmistakably a Dark Resurrection Ritual.

With skin whiter than chalk, and cat like eyes the colour of freshly spilled blood with slits for nostrils, the Dark Lord was truly a terrible sight to behold, and it seems, fully restored!

A battle ensued in which I watch our own Boy-Who-Lived sacrifice his own life by diving in front of a killing curse aimed at Fleur

Delacour the Beauxbaton Champion who had personally taken on the mission to rescue Harry Potter from clutches of the Dark Lord. As I stood in shock at seeing our saviour crumple lifelessly to the ground, I witnessed an amazing event, one that speaks of miracles. The Boy-Who-Lived, lived again. Once again our young Hero defied death from the wand of the Dark Lord as he rose from the ground and took up his own wand in battle. Not only did he live my readers, but he personally injured and drove off the Dark Lord who had been battling Headmaster Dumbledore and a few other brave wizards who had accompanied him (see accompanying story for more details). Thankfully no one was grievously injured in the battle.

I wish it were not so, I wish I could tell you that all will be well, but it is not to be. The Dark Lord has returned. I call upon the Ministry to do everything in its power to pursue and destroy this thing of evil before Dark Times descend upon us again.

Finally readers, I have to take this opportunity to correct a wrong I did against someone close to our own Harry Potter. This same someone who risked his own life to come to the aid of our young hero as he was being held in the graveyard, someone I personally witnessed raise his wand against the Dark Lord. I speak of Remus Lupin. As my readers know from previous columns he is a werewolf, but it seems one who is willing to fight against the darkness that is threatening us again. I offer my apology for the previous columns I wrote against him.

Related articles: Major Events of the First Wizarding War; Page 6

The Halloween of '81, the First Fall of the Dark Lord; Page 7

How Did He Do It? Experts Comment on the Methods Used By He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named to Cheat Death; Page 8

Coming Soon an EXCLUSIVE interview with the Boy-Who-Lived.

**** E E ****

Cornelius Fudge was having an extremely bad morning and it was only seven am. He had arrived early in preparation in taking Dumbledore down a notch or two. After the Malfoy's had stood them up, Fudge and Umbridge had drafted a letter to the Wizengamot

concerning the unsuitability of Albus Dumbledore to continue his position as Chief Warlock. The had spent a couple of hours planning out the next few weeks once the news of Dumbledore's scheme to undermine the Ministry came to light. Dolores had even thrown out the possibility of having Dumbledore's order of Merlin revoked. Now he sat drinking his third cup of tea trying to grasp what had gone wrong. He had Director Bones' preliminary report sitting beside the freshly read Daily Prophet.

He sat back in his chair wondering how long he had left to sit in his chair. He mentally pondered all of the witnesses that Madam Bones had detailed to have witnessed seeing a very much alive Dark Lord. Dumbledore, Remus Lupin, Alain Delacour, the Deputy Prime Minister of France, even his friend Lucius Malfoy under veritaserum had concurred. He sat his teacup down and turned the page to the other big story headline.

SIRIUS BLACK INNOCENT?

by Rita Skeeter

The night of the third and final task of the infamous and newly resurrected Triwizard Tournament, one that will shortly go down in the history books as the Tournament of Four Champions and will also be known thanks for the resurrection of the Dark Lord was full of additional surprises.

When it had come to Headmaster Dumbledore's attention that Harry Potter had been captured by He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, this reporter was shocked to find that the headmaster had chosen to call in Sirius Black to help with the rescue. THE Sirius Black who was imprisoned for the betrayal of the Potters, THE Sirius Black who killed his long time friend and Potter secret keeper Peter Pettigrew along with many innocent muggles. This reporter had truly thought the venerable Headmaster had finally succumbed to the pressures of his many titles and responsibilities.

Yes my readers, Sirius Black was there in the graveyard and who did he personally capture in the subsequent battle against the Dark Lord? He captured a man who was supposed to be dead, a man by the name of Peter Pettigrew. It was in fact Peter Pettigrew who conducted the Dark Ritual that returned the Dark Lord.

This was rather suspicious, and raises quite a few important questions; why had Pettigrew continued to make the wizarding world believe that he was dead when he was truly alive if he was truly a hero? Also, why was he seen performing a ritual to bring to life the very man who was responsible for the death of his closest friends whom he had originally gone out (and supposedly died) to avenge? And finally, why was Sirius Black fighting against He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and a part of the rescue attempt on Harry Potter if he truly was the Dark Lord's right hand man? Also, why does Albus Dumbledore, Leader of the Light and a formidable opponent of the Dark Lord trust Black? Could it be that Sirius Black is truly innocent of the charges that he was imprisoned for? Or is the Dark Lord working secretly for Dumbledore?

Fear not dear readers, for this reporter will not rest until these questions are fully answered!

Related articles: Biography of Sirius Black; Page 5

Biography of Peter Pettigrew; Page 6

The history of The Marauders; Page 7

Cornelius thought back to more than a year ago when Harry Potter told him that Pettigrew was alive and that Black was innocent. He glanced down at the all familiar picture of Peter Pettigrew and of course Sirius Black. This time instead of the madly insane looking Sirius Black that had been used in the last two years, a more pleasant picture of him standing side by side with James Potter, each with an arm around the shoulder of the other like they were brothers, was on display.

He was about to crumple the newspaper up and throw it away when he saw the last headline that he knew could put the final nail in his coffin.

Harry Potter - Boy-Who-Lived.

Lives Again.

by Rita Skeeter

The Night of the Second Coming of the Dark Lord was the start of Dark Times. But all hope is not lost as this reporter has witnessed; for while the Dark Lord has newly risen, he will find a stiff opponent in The-Boy-Who-Lived, fourteen year old Harry Potter.

As you, my faithful readers know, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named had kidnapped Harry Potter from the third and final task of the Triwizard Tournament and with the help of Peter Pettigrew had forced our young saviour to witness his rise. Bound to a gravestone, the young hero helplessly watched while a supposed friend of his parents who had died heroically to avenge them used his blood in a Dark ritual to give He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named life again. Thanks to a hastily planned rescue by Albus Dumbledore, a young witch, the Beauxbaton Champion and sister to Harry Potter's current love interest, Fleur Delacour risked her own life to attempt to free our young hero. Following closely behind her was the rest of the rescue party of Light Wizards.

Shortly after the rescue party arrived to rescue the youngest Triwizard Champion a battle took place between the Dark Lord and Force of Light. In the ensuing battle, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, in a bid to end the life of the one who had robbed him of his body those many years ago cast the dreaded unblockable Avada Kedavra curse at Harry Potter. The curse was intercepted by Albus Dumbledore. In a fit of rage, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named cast another curse, this time aimed at the young Beauxbatons champion Miss Delacour. However, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named was not successful as Harry Potter then truly showed how brave and heroic he was by jumping in front of the curse and intercepting it, saving Fleur's life! Your reporter watched with shocked horror along with the rest of the battling wizards and witches as this brave selfless lad collapsed as he gave his life to save another. I watched as the young beautiful witch he had just saved cry out in dismay as she cuddled his lifeless body. But it seems that Harry Potter did not survive the Killing Curse those years ago by luck or pure chance, as he proved when he, a few moments later, surged back to his feet and cast a powerful cutting curse at the one who had killed his parents, injuring the Darkest of Dark Lords, to the delighted astonishment of the Light Wizards and the shocked dismay of the aforementioned Dark Lord! He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named was so grievously injured, that he had to flee in defeat. That's right; Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived not only survived another killing curse, but defeated and injured the Dark Lord as well! A feat accomplished only twice; both by Albus

Dumbledore previously in; the Battle of Hogsmeade in the winter of '78 and in the Battle of the Ministry in the summer of the following year (for details of both battles, turn to page 5)

Related Articles: Harry Potter's Hogwarts years; Page 2

Potter, Immortal? Experts' views; Page 4

Harry Potter versus the Dark Lord, Who Will Win? Viewers comment; Page 10

"Potter." The Minister of Magic said quietly. He knew what was coming. The boy had not only survived the killing curse again, but had actually injured the Dark Lord. The fact that the Dark Lord had been injured was confirmed by Lucius. "He will be the Golden Boy." Fudge said to himself. With those words he knew what he had to do. He called Dolores into his office and said. "Contact Dumbledore, Dolores. Ask him what he needs of the Ministry."

"WHAT!" Dolores exploded. "You're not believing that rubbish are you?"

"Did you read it?" Fudge snarled. "It WAS Lucius who was in that Death Eater mask, it was confirmed by many people the Dark Lord has returned. Harry Potter survived another killing curse."

The toad like face of Dolores grew redder. "He supposedly survived a killing curse minister. What if he is in league with the Dark Lord. What if Dumbledore is too? Or maybe it was all an elaborate Hoax that even fooled..."

"A hoax that brought Peter Pettigrew and Barty Crouch Jr. back from the grave?"

"Hem..well I'm sure that we could make sure they disappear Minister." Umbridge suggested. "If they aren't around then there would be no real proof."

Fudge stared at his Senior Undersecretary and in a pure moment of clarity he realized that following her suggestions in the last few years had led Fudge to the point in his career he was in. He shook his head. "Dolores, just go do what I asked. The only chance I have to save myself politically is to get Harry Potter on my side and that is

only going to happen through Dumbledore. Also cancel that kiss on sight order for Sirius Black."

The Minister of Magic had looked back down at Amelia Bones' report as he said the last words, otherwise the look that passed Dolores Umbridge's face would have shocked him. Umbridge had become accustomed to having things go her way and she was not pleased with the ways things were turning out.

**** E E ****

At that moment Dumbledore was sitting down in his office for a much more difficult meeting. One which included Harry Potter, his bondmates, their father, Remus and Sirius Black.

"Where shall we start this morning Harry?" He asked in a tired but grandfatherly voice.

"We can start with a certain Prophecy that was made about me."

A/N: I would like to thank Teulfel1987 for the creative writing in putting together the Skeeter Articles for this story.

Chapter 30

Previous chapter

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"We can start with a certain Prophecy that was made about me."

** E E **

As Dumbledore eyes gazed into his own, Harry thoughts roamed back to an hour earlier when he had asked his bondmates to walk with him after breakfast. He wanted to let them know what had happened when he was hit by the curse. Though each of them had been curious about the emotions he had been feeling, they had respected his wishes of not reading his thoughts. When they left the Great Hall, Harry led them down to Black Lake. The path they found themselves on meandered close to the edge of the body of water only moving away as trees and rocks prevent it from its true course. There was even a small bridge that crossed the inlet of water the boats that carried the first years to the castle used to get to the castle. Harry's bondmates knew what he wanted to tell them was serious and though no words were spoken they continually looked at each. They waited patiently as they walked. They knew he would gather his thoughts and tell them when he was ready.

Summer had arrived and the morning was beautiful. The sun was still low over the surrounding mountains and the golden light caught on the small ripples on the lake. Harry gazed out over the water as they strolled along the lake's bank. Finally after a while he started his story. "Last night when the killing curse hit me.." He could feel Fleur's emotions when he said that and looked over at her. "Fleur, I did what I had to do and I would do it again. I couldn't let anything happen to you. Do you think I could live with myself if you had died?"

"And do you think I would want to live if you died?" Fleur cried out as tears sprung into her eyes as the memories of Harry falling dead in

front of her again. She looked toward the lake for a few seconds before turning back to Harry still blinking back tears. "Eet was somezing you would learn zis summer about ze bond. Most Veela stop wanting to live when zere bondmate dies."

"But..." Harry started looking dismayed at Fleur and then at the rest of his bondmates.

Fleur cut him off as she started to explain. "It isn't like ze bond kills us, non, eets..." She again stopped for several seconds as she looked for a way to explain what she was trying to say. "Do you know 'ow sad you are when you zink of your parents?"

Harry did something that surprised all of his bondmates. He smiled when she mentioned his parents. "I guess but maybe not so much anymore. But I'll explain later. What about being sad?"

"How would you feel if every single second of ze day you 'ad to zink about zat loss? Be reminded of it?" Fleur explained. "If you were to die, my magic..our magic," She nodded toward Gabrielle and Hermione,"will still seek you out and we will feel it. We will feel it not finding you. Every day for as long as we live we will feel that loss, not just in my heart, but in my magic as well. Remember when we first bonded and you were trying to find a word to describe 'ow you felt? You finally settled on complete?"

"Yeah." Harry replied.

"We feel ze same way and if you were gone we would feel like we're not all zere anymore." Fleur explained. "It's not zat simple, but.." She trailed off again as she compose her thoughts. "I can't really say what I would do 'Arry.."

"I'd hope you and Gabrielle and Hermione all try to be happy together." Harry replied. "Don't throw away a few years when we'll have all the time we want afterwards." He again looked at the three of them. "If I do die, just remember that I'll be with my parents and I'll always be watching you as well."

Hermione was the first to respond to Harry's sincerity. "It's a nice thought love, but we don't know that. Even with ghosts around, no one really knows what really happens after death. I know

Dumbledore told you it was the next great adventure, but how does he really know?"

"I do know." Harry replied. "I know there is more."

"What do you mean Harry?" Hermione asked. "What do you mean you know there's a..a what a heaven?"

That's what I want to tell you." He looked around and finding a clear place to sit, he pulled his bondmates over. When they were all comfortable he explained. "When I got hit by the curse..I woke up somewhere else." He paused as he thought about what happened. "I first thought I was back in bondimage because I was back in that house. I spent what seems like a long time there and I..I..I met my parents and found out some things."

"But it was only a few seconds maybe a minute while you..." Fleur said.

"To me it was a lot longer." Harry said. "It's hard to explain, so I want you to see it. I want you to see what happened. I'm going to remember it now."

All three bondmates watched as Harry woke up and explored the house and then meeting his mother and father. Seeing the soul piece of Voldemort and finally the discussion afterwards. When they all looked at Harry confused as they tried to figure out exactly what they just saw.

"So you see, there is an afterlife and when it's time I will see my parents again." Harry said as he returned his bondmates' gaze. "And they love you and...and are happy for us."

Hermione started to bite her lower lip as she was thinking but just as she was about to say something Fleur said it first. "Arry, what if eet was just a dream?"

"It wasn't. I'm sure of that." Harry countered. "It happened and I know my parents are proud of me." He tried to blink away the tears that had come into his eyes. "And they are watching me."

Hermione moved over to sit next to Harry and leaned her head onto his shoulder. "I love you Harry, we all love you but we don't want you

to be disappointed if you find out it wasn't real." She saw he was about to reject the idea again. "Just hear me out Harry, please." She looked into his eyes and continued. "I'm not saying it wasn't, but your mind can play tricks especially if it thinks it's dying. You associate death with your parents and while you laid there you heard Voldemort say something about a prophecy and then you knew about Horcruxes. Your mind might have made it all up as it thought it was going to die."

"But.." Harry started to protest.

"It might have happened Harry." Hermione continued through his protest. "But we just don't want to you to be hurt if it was a dream besides do you really think Professor Dumbledore really thought you had to die?"

"If I was a horcrux yes." Harry replied as he looked at his bondmates. He could feel their concern. He thought of what he had seen and though he was confident it had been real, he could see why they might think differently. He smiled at them and nodded. "I understand what you're trying to say." He cast his mind around looking for an argument until finally he said. "Look I didn't know anything about my parents' wills, so if Dumbledore has been doing something with them and my father had protected them like that will that be proof that it was my parents?"

"Zat will definitely be proof." Fleur replied. "But love, even if eet was a dream, I'm sure your parents would be very proud of you."

They all sat in silence for a little while, each of them looking over the water, finally Gabrielle said. "Eet will be nice to be 'ome. I want to swim in zee sea." She looked at Harry. "You're going to love it. Warm water, sandy beaches and ze fishes zat swim zere are beautiful."

Harry smiled at her enthusiasm. "As long as my angel is there, I'm sure it will be perfect."

"Better tell Maman zat you will need a new bathing suit." Fleur told her sister. "Your old one isn't going to fit anymore."

"Non, no maillot, I want a bikini like yours." Gabrielle replied sulkily.

Though Harry had seen both of them with no clothes on in their minds, there was something special about images of the Delacour sisters in bikinis that brought a smile to his face. Hermione was the first to notice.

"I think you broke him Gabrielle." She said as she nodded at their bondmate. "I have a bikini as well you know. Though I think I might need a new one since I've grown a little since last summer. Want to help me pick it out?" She said to him and the smile on his face seemed to get larger as the far off look in his eyes grew more noticeable. The bond sisters all ended up laughing at his look.

"Shall I mention I sunbath topless at 'ome?" Fleur asked mischievously.

"Think you would like to watch us all sunbathing topless Harry?" Hermione asked.

All thoughts of dying and the events of the previous night had fled the mind of the fourteen year old at those thoughts. Only a slight nodding of his head gave any indications he had any active thoughts at all.

"We should head back to ze castle." Fleur said finally to shatter Harry's dreamlike state. "We have zat meeting wiz ze 'eadmaster soon."

Just as they stood up to start back a voice called to them. They looked around and saw Viktor Krum walking toward them from the castle. Harry looked at Hermione who shrugged. They had told him last night they would explain and now would be as good a time as ever. They closed the distance to the Quidditch star and finally Harry put out his hand. "How are you this morning Viktor?"

"I'm fine." He responded shaking Harry's hand. "I just finished being questioned by that lady about last night."

"How did it go?"

"They are not going to charge me for attacking you and Cedric or using the torture curse." Krum started.

"Of course they wouldn't." Hermione exclaimed forcefully. "You were imperiused."

Krum shrugged, "I take nothing for granted. You know the reputation of my school. Especially with everyone saying Karkaroff ran off to join the Dark Lord again."

Harry remembered memory that he had seen in Dumbledore's pensieve. "He would do that? He betrayed a lot of Voldemort's supporters to go free."

Krum shrugged. "I don't know. He might have run as well."

"How will you get back to Durmstrang?" Harry asked. "Without Karkaroff to sail your ship?"

Krum laughed heartily. "Karkaroff did not sail the ship. He stayed in his cabin the whole time." He explained. "Ve vill not have any troubles getting back."

"I'm glad." Hermione replied. When a quizzical look appeared on Viktor's face she continued. "I really want to be your friend Viktor. I'm sorry if you wanted more, but.." She moved beside Harry and shrugged as she said. "I'm with Harry."

Again no emotions passed over Krum's face as he asked. "Can you tell me about.." He nodded his head to Fleur and Gabrielle.

"Can you keep what we tell you a secret? At least until later in the summer."

"Who would I tell?" Krum asked before nodding his acceptance. "I vill not tell anyone."

"You know about Veela?" Hermione asked.

"Da." Krum responded and looked at the two Delacours. "Durmstrang teaches about them in Magical Creatures."

"Creatures?" Harry asked angrily but Fleur put a hand on his arm. "It's alright 'Arry."

Krum had already raised a hand in protest at Harry's outburst. "I have nothing but the utmost respect for Fleur, and Veela in general. There are some who take advantage of their abilities..."

"And Ron and his mother get to read sensationalized stories about those encounters?" Hermione asked.

"I do not know who Ron.. oh that's your friend who.."

"Yes, that Ron." Hermione replied.

Krum shrugged. "Those stories can be damaging to Veela in general."

"It is true 'Arry." Fleur said. "Zere are some Veela who do take advantage of zeir power over men. Just as there are some wizards who abuse Muggles. No race is perfect."

"Ok." Harry responded as he felt the anger diminish.

"Fleur and Gabrielle both love bonded with Harry." Hermione explained to the Durmstrang Champion. "And..and I joined the bond when they offered me the chance."

"But you are not Veela?" Krum replied. "Are you?"

"No, but we're not ready to share that story." Hermione replied. "Just please accept that it did happen."

"That is the truth?" Krum asked. "You're not just trying to get rid of me?"

Hermione walked over and gave Viktor a hug and kissed him on the cheek. "You are a very special person Viktor. I had a wonderful time at the Ball, well until Ron got upset with me anyway, but I realized it has always been Harry." She smiled at the Bulgarian. "Friends?"

Viktor leaned over and kissed her on the cheek as well. "Of course. You vill still write though vant you?"

"Definitely." Hermione replied. She then looked down at her watch. "I'm sorry Viktor, but we are suppose to be in Dumbledore's office in

ten minutes." She said and then turning to everyone else. "I think we need to hurry."

Harry shook Krum's hand again and then thought of something. "Can you do me a favor?" He then explained what he wanted.

Harry's attention returned to Dumbledore's office as he watched the venerable Headmaster sigh as he sat back in his chair. No twinkle existed in his eyes at the moment as he returned Harry's gaze.

After a few seconds of meditation Dumbledore finally broke the silence. "Understand that it was never my intention to keep this information from you forever. I just felt you weren't ready for it yet."

"Ready to know there is prophecy that says only I can defeat Voldemort?"

Dumbledore eyes widened in surprise as he looked at the black haired young man in front of him. Everyone else in the room was looking at Harry as well.

"How did you find out?" Dumbledore asked finally.

"Why don't you tell me about the Prophecy first and then I'll tell you."

"Before I tell you, you must promise never to take any of that potion again." Dumbledore responded. "Voldemort only knows some of the prophecy and I don't want him to be able to use the link you share with him to get the rest of it."

Harry couldn't contain himself anymore. "The same link you thought I had to die to get rid of?" He said dangerously. Every word dripped in the anger Harry felt as he glared at the Headmaster. "Do you want to tell everyone in this room what you suspect is in me? Especially what you think it means to my future or do you want me too?"

Everyone was now again looking at Dumbledore. The Headmaster was not use to being in this situation. He was used to being in control of the information and doling it out as he saw fit. He had hoped that he could minimize how much he revealed this morning but as he looked around the room he realized that somehow Harry had discovered the secrets he had wanted kept. "Still it's possible Harry doesn't know everything or is guessing." He thought. "I'll let

you start then Harry. What do you think I've kept from you besides the prophecy?"

As Harry was beginning to speak Fleur stood and said. "Non." She looked at Harry would had turned to look at her in surprise. "E's trying to find out what you know love."

"Eet is true 'Arry." Alain Delacour said. "It is a simple trick you learn to use." He explained as he looked over at the young man he now truly considered a son. "You will tell 'im what you know and zen 'e can always say zat is exactly what 'e knows. Don't let 'im guide ze conversation."

"Can you help me sir?" Harry asked Mr. Delacour.

With those words from Harry to Alain Delacour, Albus Dumbledore realized he had made another serious mistake when it came to Harry Potter. He looked at the elder Delacour and knew it would be him that Harry turned to for advice for the future.

Of course 'Arry." Mr. Delacour replied and then turned his eyes onto Dumbledore. "Ze truth is a wonderful zing 'eadmaster, is it not?" He turned back to Harry. "If ze 'eadmaster is reluctant to give you ze answers you seek, you are not required to stay 'ere you know? I am sure zat Madam Maxine would fine a spot at Beauxbaton for you."

"Beauxbaton? But I don't know french sir." Harry replied.

"Oui, zat is true." Alain replied. "But we can get you a private tutor for your classes until your language skill are acceptable. I'm sure my daughters will be glad to 'elp."

Albus had paled as he sat in his seat. The thought of Harry Potter leaving Hogwarts wasn't something he wanted to contemplate especially after last night. With the stories that were in the Prophet this morning, Harry's name would once again be on the lips of every witch and wizard in the country. In the coming war against Voldemort, Dumbledore knew what the country must have above all else is hope. That is something Harry could provide. If he were to leave the country, it would be seen as him fleeing and the country would quickly lose all hope and fall to Voldemort without much of a struggle. Dumbledore knew he couldn't say that though. Harry never wanted to be anything but normal. Finally he spoke. "It would be

extremely dangerous for Beauxbaton to take on Mr. Potter during these times with Voldemort having returned. It would place the entire school in jeopardy."

"Are you suggesting zat 'Ogwarts is safer zan Beauxbaton?" Alain queried Dumbledore.

"This school is quite safe Alain, that I can assure you." Dumbledore replied. "Definitely safer for Harry to remain here. Especially from Voldemort."

"Safer?" Alain asked incredulously. "Voldemort himself was in ze castle for a whole school year zree years ago 'Eadmaster. You 'ad a Death Eater working in disguise of someone you called a friend zis whole year without you discovering 'im until it was too late. You even put ze man in charge of ze security of ze school. Shall we mention Basilisks and Dementors?" Alain Delacour voice was cool but struck home at each point he was trying to make. "In zose same years at Beauxbaton, zere 'asn't been a single zreat."

"Alain I assure you.."

But Mr. Delacour wasn't going to let Dumbledore regain ground as he started again. "Assure me of what? Zat zose zings were not under your control? You 'ad no way to know about zem?" His eyes focused on the venerable Headmaster. "Yet zis young man and 'is friends were able to deal with zese issues year after year." He paused for a couple of seconds before continuing. "You know what I believe is ze problem? You try to do to much Albus. You are 'eadmaster of a very prestigious school. Zat job in itself should be a full time job, but you are also Chief Warlock of ze Wizengamot, another job zat takes a significant amount of time to be done properly and finally you are also Supreme Mugwump of ze International Confederation of Wizards. Zree jobs that all should be full time positions yet you do zem all."

"I do what I must Alain. I do what needs to be done." Dumbledore replied wearily. "Is there anyone who can do the jobs better?"

"For any one of ze jobs Albus, you are clearly ze better man." Mr. Delacour agreed. "But when you spread yourself zat much, all of ze jobs suffer in performance." He looked around the room at all the eyes who had been following the conversation between the two of

them. "We should get back to ze conversation we originally came 'ear for. If you zink it is safer for 'Arry to be 'ere, zen you need to tell us why and be completely 'onest in all zat you know."

Dumbledore felt very tired. All one hundred plus years of his life seemed to catch up with him all at once. He studied Alain Delacour and then turned his gaze upon Harry and finally every other person in the room. There was not a single sympathetic look in the office. Finally he nodded in recognizing defeat as he said "Very well. You shall have the truth. Though first I must ask again, if not beg that Harry must not ever take that potion again. It would be incredibly dangerous if Voldemort found out this information through the link they share."

"I have no plans for doing it again." Harry replied. "But again I want you to tell everyone in this room what you think that link actually is."

Dumbledore again hesitated. Giving up the secrets he had kept for so long didn't come easy.

Harry noticed the hesitation and wish he truly knew if what he had witnessed the night before did happen. A plan came to mind and he quickly said to his bondmates. "I'm going to find out now if it was a dream or really happened. It will make it easier to get all the information from Dumbledore."

"Sir." He said. "Let's start with an easier question, tell me about my parent's wills."

"Why do you ask?" Dumbledore replied only slightly relieved form getting a small reprieve.

"Something that came up in a discussion." Harry replied honestly. "I never heard anything about them so I thought you might know."

Albus looked over at Remus presuming that was the source of the information and only saw surprise on his face. He turned back to Harry. "Very well. There is a reason you haven't been told about them." He said. "The wills your mother and father filed at the Ministry had problems."

"I'm curious if I happen to know what kind of problem they might have." Harry said before he turned to Remus. "Did you bring the map with you?"

"Yes, I had planned on giving it back to you afterwards. Why?"

"Give it to Professor Dumbledore but do not activate it." Harry instructed him.

Mooney shrugged and pulled out the parchment and handed it over to the Headmaster.

"Professor, by any chance do their wills do what this parchment does?" Harry asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Try to get it to reveal something?" Harry suggested. Internally he breathed in a large breath.

Dumbledore looked at Harry with a puzzled look but shrugged. He pulled out his wand and he passed it over the parchment. As he did so words formed on the paper.

"Mooney and Prongs wonders if this is the esteemed Headmaster of Hogwarts trying to find out our secrets?"

"Mr. Padfoot doesn't believe the Mighty One would stoop to this level."

"Mr. Prongs reminds Mr. Padfoot that..."

The words flowed freely until finally they started mentioned various characteristics of Dumbledore that became rather insulting.

Harry's gaze lifted from the map to the Professor. "Uh, sorry sir. I didn't think they would say something like that."

Dumbledore continued to gaze at the parchment. Finally he lifted his gaze back to the room. "How did you know?" he asked quietly. "Very few people have seen those wills."

Harry turned around and looked at his bondmates. He smiled as they all silently agreed he had been correct and it was not a dream. The smile extended further as he really knew he had seen his parents. He finally turned back to Dumbledore. "Sir, just tell me everything you know and then I'll be glad to tell you."

"Very well." Albus replied. "But first may I ask how to unlock this wonderful piece of magic?"

"Harry touched his wand to the parchment and said. 'I solemnly swear I am up to no good.'" He then watched as the lines and dots appeared on the parchment.

"Very well done." Dumbledore replied solemnly as he looked over at the two Marauders present. "Very impressive."

Remus and Sirius both couldn't help but feel pleased at the compliment.

Sirius then had a thought. "Oh, Lily's won't be that phrase though. For her will try 'I solemnly swear I will kill the Marauders someday.'"

"Kill the marauders?" Harry asked.

"Yeah well Sirius turned her hair yellow one day and she wasn't very happy about it." Remus replied. "I don't think she would have used that one for her will though. For hers try 'I solemnly swear that I am up to good.' Though she always finished it with 'most of the time'."

Dumbledore looked again at the map and said "As soon as I get a chance, I will evaluate the wills and if those do work, then I will get them processed." He looked at Harry and Alain. "I have truly been trying to protect your interest in this Harry. If the matter had went to the courts as they were with no wills to speak of, it is very likely control of the money would have passed to the Dursley's."

Harry shuddered at the thought of his Aunt and Uncle controlling anything of his parents. "Thank you sir. I appreciate you doing that for me. They would have taken any money and destroyed anything that belonged to my parents."

"Zough I would ask why didn't you ask Mr. Lupin to assist in zese matters?" Alain asked.

"Mostly that would have been my fault sir." Remus replied. "When James and Lily died along with Sirius killing Peter and in prison, I just wanted to disappear for a while. As you noticed on my CV I stayed in the muggle world for a couple of years after that."

"And once he had reappeared, the idea that the wills actually meant anything had long disappeared from my thought process." Dumbledore added.

Mr. Delacour nodded. "Very well. Now shall we get back to the more difficult things you need to tell Harry?"

Dumbledore again hesitated and then got up and walked over to his cabinet and pulled out his pensieve. He then returned and placed it on his desk. "Again I will stress how important it is that the information I am going to give not get back to Voldemort. The link Harry has to Vold..."

"It's gone!" Harry replied irritably. "The link no longer exists."

A look of sadness fell over Dumbledore. "I know the bond blocks it Harry, but you really don't understand what..."

"That I was a horcrux?" Harry exclaimed loudly as he stood up and glared at the Dumbledore. "You knew I had a piece of Voldemort's soul in me didn't you? You thought I was going to have to die before Voldemort could be killed."

Remus, Sirius and Alain Delacour were shocked at the words Harry had just said and all were looking at Dumbledore with a mixture of surprise, wonder and anger. Harry's bondmates were all comforting him.

Dumbledore could only ask one word as he stared at Harry. "How?"

"So you don't deny knowing about it? About thinking I had to die?"

"I strongly suspected it." Headmaster finally replied. "Why do you think it's gone now?"

Harry looked at the pensieve in front of him on the desk. "Tell me the prophecy and I'll tell you how I know. I presume you can get a memory from me?"

Dumbledore nodded sagely and after a deep sigh he proceeded to tell his tale. "Fifteen years ago, I was at the Hog's Head. That's a bar in Hogsmeade." He said when he realized many people in the room wouldn't recognize the name. "I was there to meet and interview an applicant for Divination teacher. It was against my inclination to allow the subject of Divination to continue at all, but this person was the great-granddaughter of a very famous Seer. It was only common courtesy that I should meet her. It was a disappointing interview. The woman seemed to have no trace of the gift. I informed her after the interview that I didn't think she was suitable for the position and prepared to leave. At that moment I had an experience very much like yours last year Harry."

At the puzzled look on Harry's face, Dumbledore put his wand to his temple. He pulled out long thin streams of silvery stuff which he gently placed in the basin. He then prodded it with his wand. A figure rose out of the bowl.

Harry and Hermione instantly recognized the person covered in shawls and wearing glasses that magnified her eyes to enormous size. Harry recognized the horse tones as she began to speak.

'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches...
born to those who
have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the
Dark Lord will mark
him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not...
and either must die
at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives...
the one with the
power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month
dies...'

The harsh voice died away and the ghostly figure of Trelawny disappeared into the basin.

It was several seconds before anyone spoke. The first to do so was Sirius.

"That load of garbage is what got James and Lily killed?" He said. "She probably made it up Albus. you just said you had told her she wasn't qualified for the job. Obviously she was trying to impress you."

Sirius was surprise when it was Harry who answered. "No, she made one last year too. I heard it. She predicted that Wormtail would rejoin Voldemort."

"WHAT?" Sirius said and then he turned to Dumbledore. "And you didn't do anything then?"

Before Dumbledore could reply Harry spoke up first. "She didn't say Peter specifically. I only know now what it meant because of how that night unfolded."

"But still this prophecy..." Sirius tried again.

"It is a true prophecy." Dumbledore said. "It is recorded in the Hall of Prophecies."

"What is the Hall of Prophecies?" Hermione asked as her curiosity peaked.

"There is a room in the Ministry where all of the true prophecies are recorded."

"So why have you been protecting this prophecy and stating how important it is that Voldemort not find out what it says, when any of his Death Eaters can waltz into the Ministry and listen to it?"

"They can't." Dumbledore explained. "Only the people who the prophecy is about can remove the device the orb that contains the prophecy."

"Oh." Hermione replied but it only took a second to get over that argument and continue on. "Ok so it is a true prophecy. How does it mean Harry specifically?"

"Actually, it could have been two people." Dumbledore replied. "There were two children born at the end of that July who were born to parents who had escaped Voldemort three times. The parents

were good friends of each other in fact. Harry of course was one of them and the other was..."

"Neville?" Harry asked remembering his mother saying he had been born the day before him.

Dumbledore looked over his half moon glasses at Harry questioningly before finally answering. "Yes. Mr. Longbottom was the other possibility."

"But..but." Hermione still wanted to argue. "There are many different calendars in the world and..and.."

The Headmaster raised his hand to pause her comments. "Miss Granger, I apologize but we could discuss this all day. Let me make a quick summary of what I discovered about that particular aspects of true prophecies." He paused for a second and then explained. "A true prophecy will be made in world references as understood by the Seer. In other words, a Seer will not give a prophecy in a different language or a different cultural reference than they personally use. In this case, Sybill Trelawney uses the modern calendar so the Prophecy was about the month of July."

"Oh." Hermione repeated.

"So it might not be 'Arry?" Gabrielle asked hopefully. "It might be ze other boy?"

"Unfortunately it is definitely Harry." Dumbledore replied. "That became clear that night."

"My scar..he marked me. That's what the prophecy said." Harry replied and his hand went to his forehead.

"That is how I interpreted it." Dumbledore replied.

"If you knew Harry was going to have to fight Voldemort." Remus started. "Why haven't you been training him?"

"In what?" Dumbledore asked then held up his hand again to thwart the onslaught of questions that he realized was headed his way. "Let me explain what I have done so far. As the adults in this room know, there is a reason we do not take anyone under eleven at

Hogwarts or any other magical school. Why they are not allowed wands until then. A child exerting himself magically before that point can cause damage to his magical core." He paused for a moment expecting Hermione to ask a question and then continued. "So I could not train him until he arrived at the school. So why didn't I then?"

"Zat is ze question." Alain said.

"In what? What was I to train him in? The prophecy mentioned a power that Voldemort knows not." Dumbledore again paused and looked around. "I constantly asked at every teacher's meeting if any student was displaying any kind of special abilities."

"Is that why you asked that question?" Remus asked.

"Yes." Dumbledore replied. "I had a suspicion that it was something that would never materialize in a classroom, but I had to be sure." He again paused and looked around the room. "But there was nothing. Harry was a fine but average student, but nothing that gave me any indication of that special ability."

"What about 'is parseltongue ability?" Fleur asked. "Zat is something special."

"While I agree it is very special, it is also something that Voldemort is very familiar with, besides there are other issues that prevented me from exploring that angle." Dumbledore replied. "I did come across my first clue to his abilities last year, but it wasn't until this year that I understood what that clue meant and I think last night proved it." He again paused again as everyone waited to find out what the Headmaster thought Harry's special ability was. "At the end of last year Harry performed the most remarkable feat of magic."

"The Patronus?" Hermione asked.

"Exactly." The Headmaster replied with a smile. "He cast a Patronus that was so powerful that it drove off every dementor guarding this school."

"You should see it now." Muttered Sirius.

"Yes, I can imagine it is quite a bit more impressive now." Dumbledore replied as he looked at the young man and his bondmates. "But at the time I didn't realize exactly what it meant. I thought maybe Harry had come into his own magically, so I waited for this year to begin, hoping or expecting greater things from him, but it was not to be. As far as his teachers could tell me, his abilities were average." He looked at Harry. "Not to say your your Triwizard performance wasn't great, but outside of a very nice summoning charm, it has not been impressive magically."

"But how could he.. I mean I saw him." Hermione replied.

"I was very confused as well. It wasn't until I witnessed the bondimage that it started making sense to me." Dumbledore explained. "Professor Berceau used a phrase 'over abundance of love to give' to describe Harry's heart. In fact it was more than she ever came across in her research before." He turned to Remus. "What drives the Patronus Charm?"

"Positive emotions of course like...love."

"Exactly." Dumbledore said. "I think for the first time last year, Harry tapped his real power."

"But..what did I do last night that proved it?" Harry asked still very uncertain to what was being explained.

"I had an extremely upset Hagrid in here this morning explaining that an Acromantula was killed in the maze last night." The Headmaster replied. "I remembered Miss Granger telling me in the mist of everything else that you had save Miss Delacour from one. Would you like to tell everyone here what you did to it Harry?"

"It was attacking Fleur and..and I just hit it with a cutting curse." Harry explained.

"And.." Dumbledore prodded the young man.

"I killed it." Harry admitted with a shrug.

"Harry's spell basically sliced the creature in half." Dumbledore continued to explain. "Was it only one cast Harry?"

"Yes sir." Harry admitted.

Dumbledore's eyes roved around the room. "The spider in question was over fourteen feet long, one hex and he sliced in half."

A low whistle came from Sirius as he looked at his godson.

"Harry may I ask what you were thinking when you did that?" Dumbledore asked.

"It was on top of Fleur and would've killed her." Harry replied, "I just knew I had to save her."

"Again I argue that when he needed to desperately save someone he loved he was able to tap into his power." Dumbledore said.

"But love?" Harry asked. "Doesn't the prophecy say Voldemort's equal. How would love do that?"

"Equal but opposite." Fleur murmured.

"What?"

"Equal but opposite." She said again, louder this time. " 'Ate drives Voldemort, zat is why 'e can perform ze killing curse so easily."

Dumbledore nodded. "Exactly."

"So I'm suppose to love him to death?" Harry asked sarcastically.

"Non, Ze 'eadmaster didn't say zat 'arry." Fleur chastised. "E is saying zat love is what drives your magic."

Dumbledore nodded again. "Now I think i have answered your questions, will you answer mine?" He asked Harry. "How did you find out what you know?"

Harry was very tempted to repeat the Headmaster's words back to him from three years previous. "Not today, not now, but someday you'll know." But he realized that Dumbledore needed to know, needed to understand how things were. "How do I give a memory sir?" Harry asked finally. "It would be a lot easier to show you."

Dumbledore scooped up his memory of the prophecy from the Pensieve and instructed Harry on releasing the memory. Shortly the silvery stuff was in the basin. Dumbledore looked at Harry questioningly.

"Please do." Harry said.

It was several minutes before Dumbledore returned from the memory. His eyes were wet with unshed tears. When he had taken his seat he looked around the office before turning back to Harry. "I'm not sure what emotions to express. Your parents were people I called my friends and to see them brought both joy and sadness."

Harry nodded.

"James, Lily? What?" Sirius asked with a confused look on his face.

"Remus, Sirius, Mr. Delacour maybe you might want to take a look as well." Harry said.

When they returned from the memory, Remus and Alain had deep reflective faces while Sirius was smiling.

"You would have at least thought James would have mentioned my incredible escape from Azkaban." He said to Remus.

"Why would he have been watching over a mangy mutt?" Remus asked returning the grin.

"We can discuss James and Lily another time." Dumbledore interjected. "But let's finish this up." He turned to Harry. "I guess I should apologize to you Harry. I admit that I thought you had to die to get rid of the Horcrux that was in you."

"Albus, speaking of zat, do you know how 'Arry lived zis time?" Alain Delacour asked.

"I have my suspicions yes." Dumbledore replied. He looked at the young messy haired young man in front of him. "Voldemort made a horrible mistake last night I think. You see in his cruelty and his desire to remove as obstacle that prevented him from killing Harry, he actually allowed Harry to live again."

"What mistake did he make sir?" Harry asked.

"What did he take from you?"

"Ze blood?" Alain asked. "Ow did zat 'elp?"

"When he had his new body created with Harry's blood, the blood still has Lily's protection in it." Albus explained. "I suspect that linked Voldemort to Harry in a different way. So when Harry should have died, the blood in Riddle's very veins prevented it. Those in the graveyard saw how much pain he seemed to be in when the killing curse hit Harry. Now having seen what Harry witnessed, it seems that the curse did kill the part of Voldemort's soul that was attached to him."

"So Voldemort killed 'is own 'orcrux?" Fleur asked.

Dumbledore gave a small smile. "He did exactly that."

"So what now?" Harry asked. "What do I do? How...how do I kill Voldemort?"

"I do not know." Dumbledore replied. "But until we find and destroy all of his horcruxes he can't really be killed."

"Ow many 'orcruxes do you zink 'e has Albus?" Alain asked.

"Miss Granger was on the right track I think." The Headmaster replied. "I truly think he would have tried for an arithmantic significant number to part his soul presuming it would have made him that much stronger. The main ones are of course three, seven and thirteen."

"So he might have only made two?" Hermione asked.

Dumbledore sighed. "I don't think so. Harry when Fleur killed Nagini last night, did the noise that came from it sound familiar?"

Harry looked questioningly at the Headmaster before thinking back to the graveyard. He had been exhausted and hadn't paid that much attention but now as he thought back he did realize the sound had been very familiar. "It..it sounded like the diary sir. After I destroyed it."

"I thought it might." Dumbledore said.

"What does zat mean?" Mr. Delacour asked. "What was zat scream?"

"It was the death of another Horcrux." Dumbledore said. "Which means we can probably rule three out. He made his first one, the diary that Harry destroyed at the age of sixteen. When I interviewed Peter Pettigrew myself after Madam Bones finished with him, he admitted that Riddle didn't make Nagini a Horcrux until last summer with the death of Bertha Jorkins. I can't imagine him going fifty years without making another one."

"So how many? And do we know what they might be or where they are?" Remus asked.

"I don't know how many, but with what we just saw, I might have a way to find out." Dumbledore said. "Again I will compliment Miss Granger on another clever insight."

Hermione blushed at the compliment but unsure of what she had offered.

"She pointed out something that I never thought of." Dumbledore admitted. "Every time Voldemort has created a horcrux, he has in fact lost half of his remaining soul. As he has lost his humanity, the changes seemed to be reflected on his soul parts. Harry said the first Horcrux had a physical representation that looked very much like a sixteen year old boy. What was in that cupboard was significantly less. It might be possible to determine how much of the soul must be lost before it gets to that point."

"Oui, zat is definitely a possibility." Alain replied. "Is zere any 'elp I can provide. Resources?"

"Not at this moment." Dumbledore replied.

"Zen I can at least start 'arry on being trained. 'E will come directly to my place as soon as ze year is over."

Dumbledore looked up. A troubled look was on his face. "About the summer." Dumbledore started. "With all that has happened you'd be safer..."

"Don't you dare say he should go to the Dursley's." Sirius almost shouted as he cut off Dumbledore.

All three of Harry's bondmates were out of their chairs instantly and in front of Harry. Each ready hex the Headmaster if that was what he was suggesting.

Alain Delacour almost smiled as he watched his youngest daughter defending Harry. He recognized the glint in both of his daughter's eyes. He didn't want this to escalate into a potential issue of his daughters possibly transforming so he also rose from his seat, only to be beaten again by Harry. The young man was already up and had his arms wrapped around Gabrielle.

"Calm down my Angel." Harry said gently. "Let's hear what the Headmaster needs to say." He looked over at Fleur and Hermione and smiled.

"You are not going there 'Arry." Fleur said.

When the office had settled down again Harry looked at the Headmaster. "Was that what you were going to suggest?"

"I just ask everyone to listen first." Dumbledore said and he waited until several people had nodded before continuing. "Yes, I am suggesting that Harry return to the Dursley's. The wards there will protect him."

"How do they protect him Albus?" Alain asked.

"They are driven off of the blood of his mother's family, her sister. They are the most effective wards possible."

"Wouldn't they be useless after Voldemort took Harry's blood?"

"I..I don't think so." Dumbledore replied. "They have an intent base to them as well. No one magical wanting to harm Harry can enter the wards as well. I purposely added that layer in case.." He looked over at Harry before continuing. "I was concerned that one of the Death

Eaters might try to turn your mother into an Inferius to attack you if they discovered the blood base to the wards."

"What's an inferius?" Harry asked.

"Animated corpse." Remus replied.

"You mean they can turn dead..." Harry started to ask.

"Voldemort used them frequently in the past." Dumbledore replied.

"How do you kill them?"

"Since they are already dead, you can't kill them but you can destroy their bodies by..."

"Fire." This answer came from Fleur.

"Exactly." Dumbledore replied. "But back to the current problem."

Harry looked at Hermione, Fleur and Gabrielle. All of them were shaking their heads slightly. All were mentally telling him he shouldn't.

"Are you suggesting my 'ome wards are not sufficient?" Alain asked.

"I'm only saying the blood wards offer him the best protection."

"Non, I disagree." Alain responded. "Any ward can be collapsed given time. Even ze wards surrounding zis castle."

"I agree, but.."

"If zere was an all out attack on zose wards at 'is relatives 'ouse, what would 'Arry be able to do?" Mr. Delacour asked. "e 'as no floo connection and nobody zere to protect 'im."

"I would arrange for someone to be there to watch after him of course and they can apparate him out if necessary."

"And I can provide portkeys to make sure zey can all get to safety if our wards are attacked. With my larger property, more magical

users and portkeys, I zink I can provide a much safer summer zan you can."

Dumbledore sighed and tried to marshal more arguments finally he decided on the truth. He turned to Harry. "Harry, if you walk out of this school next week and head directly to the Delacours, the wards at Privet Drive will fail immediately."

"So."

"I am hoping Riddle is focused on the rest of the Prophecy this summer, but if he decided to find you and those wards are down, he will kill the Dursleys."

"So you are saying I should go be abused by my relatives so I can save their lives?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore grimaced at the statement as he remembered the bondimage and saw the abuse Harry suffered. "I think we can make it better Harry." He said. "You'll not have to stay too long and.."

"How long?" Harry asked.

Dumbledore quickly computed the numbers he needed. "I think if the wards are kept in place until mid September when he knows you'll be back at Hogwarts..."

"Or Beauxbaton." Alain Delacour added.

"I hope I answered the questions to your satisfaction that we are past that?" Dumbledore asked but Mr. Delacour only kept an impassive face. The Headmaster turned back to Harry. "so for three months charging two weeks should be all we need."

"I'll do it." Harry replied and he watched the Headmaster sigh in relief. "But under one condition."

"Which is?" Dumbledore asked with some trepidation.

"I want some kind of wards put around the Granger's house." Harry started. "I also want them to have a portkey they can use to get to safety if they are attacked. That is my only condition, but it is non-negotiable."

"Harry?" Hermione said. "I..thank you."

"I will not let anything happen to your family Hermione. Especially because of me."

"Putting wards up in a muggle neighborhood might be difficult Harry."

"You bloody well did it at Privet Drive, so you can do it at Hermione's house as well." Harry exclaimed as he glared at the Headmaster. "Who do you think means the most to me, Hermione and her family or the Dursleys? If you want the Dursleys protected, then you better plan on protecting Hermione's family as well."

Dumbledore nodded as he realized this was not an argument that he could or even should try to win. "I'll make sure it's done."

"Before I leave next week." Harry said.

"I'll need Hermione to contact her parents and let them know about it." The Headmaster said. "They are familiar with portkeys so that part shouldn't be difficult."

Hermione had been in thought ever since Harry had willingly given up himself to protect her parents and an idea came to mind. "Professor, the wards at the Dursley's, what do they cover?"

"They are established around the perimeter of the property, not perfectly of course but mostly."

"So the wards consider the whole property, house and gardens to be home?"

"Yes."

"If Harry were to live in the back garden instead of actually in the house, would that satisfy the wards?"

"It should but why are you asking. Are you suggesting Harry sleep outside every night?" Dumbledore asked.

"Actually yes." Hermione replied. she turned to Remus. "Could we borrow your tent? The one you have down in the Chamber?"

Remus smiled as he realized what she intended to do, but had to ask. "We?"

"We will not allow Harry to stay there alone." She looked at her bond sisters who were all nodding.

Remus looked at Alain, "And you'll let them?"

"Remus, I learned a long time ago not to tick off a Veela, even if zey are my daughters." He replied. Then Alain addressed Dumbledore. "It looks like ze youngsters 'ave a plan. If you don't mind, I would like to make some arrangements of my own for zis to 'appen."

Dumbledore could only nod.

"Zere is one more question about ze prophecy." Mr. Delacour said. "Harry's parent mentioned someone overheard some of it, how did zat 'appen?"

"One of Voldemort's servants was listening outside the door that evening." Dumbledore explained. "He only heard the first part before he was thrown out."

"Do you know which Death Eater it was?" Alain asked. "It seems to me zat 'e is as responsible as Voldemort and Pettigrew for ze death of ze Potters."

Dumbledore stared at the French politician as he tried to find the best way to answer that question. Finally he responded. "I can assure you the man has suffered for many years because of what he did."

***** E E *****

As Amelia closed her folder containing the notes she had collected over the previous day she let out a sigh. She was exhausted but knew there was still much to be done. Her fatigued thoughts turned to Lucius Malfoy as she wondered how he was doing. She hadn't told anyone what she had done with the man, though it had been perfectly legal. She had learned from Pettigrew's confession that

He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named had been able to break through Bertha Jorkins oblivation that Crouch had done. She had let Malfoy sit in a room for twenty minutes doing nothing, and then she had obliviated his memory of that time. She had the appropriate forms documenting the obliviation filled out and ready to be filed. But with all that had happened anyone would understand if they didn't get turned in a timely manner. As she walked out of the makeshift office she thought, "If..He-Wh...oh come on I can at least think it, Voldemort does break through the oblivation, I wonder if he will think Malfoy's time in the room alone was a planted memory and try to dig deeper into Lucius's mind looking for something that doesn't exist."

A/N: Hope you enjoyed the chapter.

Hopefully for those who didn't like Malfoy going free, you enjoyed the plan Madam Bones has going. Do something entirely legal and left Voldemort misinterpret what was done and punish his follower.

Chapter 31 – Summary

Chapter 15 - This chapter begins with Harry waking up next to Hermione. They have a sincere chat dealing with the possibility of sex. Hermione deduces that when sex is introduced into the relationship it will have profound effects.

Remus arrives and chats with Dumbledore. The bonded make their first appearance to the rest of the school. Draco insults Gabrielle, Fleur and Hermione, and Fleur gets a bit of revenge with her Bowel cleansing spell. Finally they escort Remus into the Chamber where they tell him the secret.

Chapter 16 – Starts off with the bonded beginning to leave the Chamber. Remus discusses the pranks and Basilisk with Harry who agrees to letting Remus do the job. Later Harry discusses things with Ron who seems to have a problem with Veelas. Later in the Chamber Fleur and Hermione are able to complete the Patronus Charm. Finally the Headmaster asks them to bring Buckbeak from the cave to the castle and after a close call with Filch, they are able to do that.

Chapter 17 – Starts off with a mental conversation between Fleur and Harry. Ginny and Gabrielle become friends. Hermione gets letters from the Skeeter article, of which most are destroyed by Fleur. Nifflers in Hagrid's class. Hermione gets a lesson on House elves and bonds from Fleur. Molly Weasley sends a Howler calling Gabrielle a Veela Hussy while The twins are introduced to Fleur. Snape taunts Harry in class about the skeeter article and the howler to which Harry fights back with advice from Fleur and Hermione. Ginny receives a letter from her mother that she shares. It discusses that her mother thinks Ginny would be a better match for Harry. Gabrielle discovers Luna.

This chapter ends with Fleur showing Harry an error in his potion making, and the Twins finally throwing their celebration party for Harry completing the second task.

Chapter 18 – A visit to Privet Drive for pranking ideas. The twins confront Harry about Fleur. A room is found behind the Statue in the Chamber and Tom Riddle's journal is found within it. Hermione reads the word Horcrux out loud sending Dumbledore into a frenzy, and finally Dumbledore thinks about what he reads in the journal.

Chapter 19 – Pranks start against the Dursleys and Remus discusses the value of the Basilisk with Harry. The twins are taken to the Chamber and let in on the secret.

Chapter 20 – Pranks, pranks and more pranks. Snape discusses Harry's new occlumency skills with Dumbledore, and Fleur and Hermione have another discussion where Fleur reveals to Hermione that she already considers Harry her husband and Hermione discovers her hair changing abilities.

Chapter 21 – Another Prank, Harry discovers Hermione's hair styling skills, and Gabrielle is distracted in McGonagall's class because of Harry kissing Hermione. Easter eggs arrive from Mrs. Weasley and returned along with a polite refusal letter. Mr. Delacour sends a letter about a book on Horcruxes while Remus recommends a new person to help sell the Basilisk parts when he finds out Mundungus is trying to rip them off. He also tells Harry about Lily (snape was her friend.) Mr. Delacour arrives and gives them the book while also giving Harry a potion that will allow him to buy Gabrielle and gift and not allow her to find out what it is. He also figures out Padfoot is Sirius and discusses helping him.

Chapter 22 – Harry figures out the Diary was probably a Horcrux. He and his bondmates discuss his scar and while under the purple potion's effects and shopping for Gabrielle's present, he collapses and he gets a vision of Voldemort and Wormtail. This leads to an indepth discussion with Dumbledore and he finds out they know what Horcruxes are. Rita Skeeter publishes another article on Harry and Hermione realizes Skeeter's secret.

Chapter 23 – Draco and his thugs are introduced to the waterfall potion to start off the chapter. Bagman tells about the third task, Mr. Crouch shows up. During Gabrielle's birthday party, Harry tell her he loves her. He then makes an early morning trip to the Beauxbaton carriage to tell fleur as well. Vernon has his first golf outing which doesn't go so well while Petunia discovers the loose floorboard in Dudley's room.

Chapter 24 – Draco and goons try to attack Gabrielle causing her to transform. Harry comforts her and lets her know that he accepts her for who she is when she gets upset and is afraid Harry might not love her anymore. Harry and Gabrielle visit the Headmaster where

they enter the memories in the Headmaster's pensieve. Upon exiting the memories, they discuss the attack with Dumbledore. They talk to Winky and decide to discuss bonding with her. Ginny is brought into the secret.

Chapter 25 – Ginny and Gabrielle talk, Harry gets the map from Moody, after an all night vigil with the map including Moaning Myrtle, they discover and capture Skeeter. They came to a deal with the reporter in the Room of Requirements. Skeeter writes a good article on the attack which surprises Dumbledore. Ludo's story also breaks and he is dismissed. The morning of the third task with Mrs. Weasley and Bill coming to see Harry.

Chapter 26 – The Delacour parents meet Sirius and Remus in the Chamber. The Champions go into the maze. Fleur and Harry work together. They discover Moody is actually Crouch Jr. and Dumbledore stuns him and takes him back to his office. As Harry and Fleur argue about taking the cup together, Dumbledore figures out it might be a trap a little too late.

Chapter 27 – The third task from Gabrielle's and Hermione's viewpoint. The plan and rescue of Harry, the battle in the Graveyard. Harry gets hit with the Killing Curse and meeting his parents when he 'dies' along with the death of the Horcrux that was in him. He returns and hits Voldemort with a Curse that seriously injures him and forces him to apparate away. Sirius captures Pettigrew.

Chapter 28 –Voldemort goes to the Malfoy Manor. Fleur kills Nagini then heals Harry's arm. They all go back to Dumbledore's office. We learn that Rita Skeeter had trailed along and witnessed Voldemort. Lucius is sent to the Graveyard to clean up the evidence and look for Nagini. Pettigrew and Crouch Jr. are taken to the hospital wing. Fudge shows up with Dementors. Dumbledore, Harry, Fleur and Hermione all produce the Patronuses, while Gabrielle working with the Memory of Harry being alive, produces hers for the first time. It is a Doe. Fudge thinks Dumbledore is up to some kind of trick and doesn't believe Crouch and Pettigrew are who they are. He orders all the Champions back to the pitch so he can get to other business. When they get there, they realize the Triwizard cup was left in the Graveyard. When Fudge is reciting rules that the winner is the one who brings the cup out of the maze, Lucius Malfoy, who had picked up the cup in the Graveyard appears next to them.

Chapter 29 – Fudge refuses to believe any of Dumbledore's story is real. He even thinks Malfoy is a polyjuiced imposter trying to make him look bad. He orders Amelia Bones to thoroughly investigate the issue and prove who the imposters are. He and Dolores Umbridge leave (to go to Malfoy's house to prove he is home and not the 'imposter' on the ground.) Before leaving he does award Harry the cup and winnings from the tournament. Rita and the bonded talk about what she will print the next day and eventually they end up in the Room of Requirements for a night of sleep together. Their slumber is awakened by Dobby who let's them know it's time to be questioned. After a quick stop by the Headmaster's office so he can ask them not to tell Madam Bones about Horcruxes, they discuss the previous night's events with her, eventually having to tell her about the bond. Harry gets very upset to discover the Lucius Malfoy walked away without being charged. Later at Breakfast the prophet arrives with the first three stories by Skeeter in it. The stories are the Dark Lord has returned, Sirius Black might be innocent, and a story about Harry surviving another killing curse. Minister Fudge realizes his errors while Umbridge isn't so quick to do so. The Chapter ends in the Headmaster's office with Harry asking about the Prophecy.

Chapter 30 – Harry and his bondmates discuss what happened when Harry is hit by the killing curse, The girls aren't convinced that it wasn't just a dream. They discuss things with Viktor including the secret of them being bonded. In Dumbledore's office they spend a great deal of time convincing the Headmaster to divulge his secrets about the Prophecy and the Horcrux he suspected Harry had in him. They also talk about Harry's parent's wills. After Dumbledore reveals the prophecy and that he believes Harry is a horcrux, Harry gives him the memory of meeting his parents. A discussion on how many Horcruxes Voldemort might have happens. Dumbledore also suggests that in order to protect the Dursley's, Harry should return to their house to recharge the Wards. After a tense standoff, Harry agrees but only if Wards and Portkeys are given to Hermione's parents. Finally the chapter ends with Amelia Bones thinking of what she did to Malfoy, and how it might play out with Voldemort.

Chapter 32

Lord Voldemort wandered the empty house that had become his place of escape. It was the long forgotten home of Evan Rosier. He had been the last of his line when he fell fighting Aurors. With the home being located in a remote location no one had been interested in it and it slowly slipped from people's minds. It was by no means luxurious as Malfoy Manor, but it was still better than the forest of Albania or the decrepit Riddle Manor. After the Dark Lord verified there were no hidden traps or detection spells on the property, he conjured a large chair and settled into its soft cushions as he considered what he needed to do.

He knew first he would need servants, people to bring and prepare food for him. Though he could conjure most anything else including water; food was the major exception and Voldemort wasn't about to sullen his hands in menial tasks like cooking. He had taken a large amount of food from Malfoy Manor to supply himself and for the short time he could transfigure and warm that food. His main problem was Lucius Malfoy. Until Voldemort knew what had happened to him, he couldn't risk calling his Death Eaters again. Voldemort knew he needed to strengthen himself before he risked a confrontation with Aurors.

The seat Voldemort had conjured was more throne than chair. More grandiose than the chair he had used at Malfoy Manor, it was very similar to the chair Albus Dumbledore used in the Great Hall of Hogwarts. As he settled into it, he opened the Daily Prophet he had acquired by summoning and killing a passing delivery owl. Calm fury swept through the Dark Lord as he read the headlines. His plans for his resurrection to occur unknown to the Wizarding world lay in ruin. Voldemort didn't care about the issue of Sirius Black except it would mean the Aurors now searching for him would be turned for the Dark Lord making his rise to power more difficult. The final headline concerning the Boy-Who-Lived with a picture of Harry Potter caused Voldemort to pause. He visualized the previous night, of the boy lying dead from being hit by the killing curse, only to be back on his feet and fighting only seconds later. As he sat there and stared at the boy's picture, he knew what he had to do before anything else. "I have to know about the Prophecy." He thought. "There must be more, something that is very important." Severus had told him that many years ago that it had been Trelawney who had made the Prophecy to Dumbledore, but she couldn't be touched since she

never left Hogwarts. A thought from a conversation a long time ago emerged. One of his followers and most gifted spies had described the various things that happened in the Department of Mysteries in the Ministry.

"..and in another room, there are shelves and shelves of every Prophecy ever made." Augustus Rookwood had said. "Blue orbs.."

Voldemort had not really been interested at the time. He believed all he had to do was kill the two infants that the prophecy might have referred to to end any threat they might pose but that had not been the case. "Unfortunately Rookwood is still in Azkaban and I'm not strong enough yet to free him and my other loyal servants."

The Dark Lord continued to contemplate his plans and how badly things had gone the previous night after a year of planning and execution. "It is but a minor setback though." He thought. "I am immortal and have all the time in the world. It might take longer than expected, but someday the world will kneel at my feet." Finally Voldemort rose from this throne and pulled out his wand as he started thinking of the wards he would deploy around the house and property.

*** E E ***

When Harry and his bondmates had left Dumbledore's office, the Headmaster had asked the rest of the adults to remain. There was much to discuss.

"I still disagree with you asking 'Arry to return to zat 'ouse." Alain said.

"Alain, surely you can understand my reasons." Dumbledore replied. "Harry will definitely be safer there, besides I'm the one who made the Dursleys a part of this. If I hadn't left Harry on their doorsteps, they would not be in jeopardy."

"So you are using 'Arry to make yourself feel better?" Mr. Delacour replied in disgust. "As I said earlier, I will make my own arrangements with ze Dursleys. But if zey 'urt 'Arry or any of my daughters, Zey will regret it.." The words tapered out but the stare between the two men was very much in effect.

"Your eldest is of age and should be able to deal with anything that arises." Dumbledore said. "Two weeks is hardly any time at all."

"Two weeks to you and me Albus is nothing. But to a young man like 'Arry it can seem like an eternity."

"You may be right." Albus agreed with a sigh. "I do forget what it is to be young." He nodded at the Alain. "Let me know if there are issues with the Dursleys." He then turned to Remus and Sirius.

"Remus, I'm going to need you to make contact with the werewolves.." He started but Remus was shaking his head.

"I know what you're going to ask me to do Albus, but I am hoping," He glanced over at Alain Delacour, "that I will be employed next week. If I am, then I will still be able to be in contact with the werewolves, but not answering to you." Lupin looked slight abashed. "I'm sorry, but this is an opportunity that I can't let go."

"May I ask who you would be working for?"

"Me." The French Deputy Minister replied. "I am hoping zat Monsieur Lupin will take up a very challenging position for my government."

"I see." The Headmaster replied staring at Lupin. "You would let the werewolves fall in with Voldemort so you could have a job?"

"Eadmaster, zat was entirely uncalled for." Alain said. "As 'e said, 'e would still be able to make contact with zem and I will make sure if 'e does discover information zat might be useful to you, it makes it back to you. But 'is first responsibility will be to ze werewolves zemselves and ze people of France."

"I think overall I will do a lot more good this way Albus." Remus said. "I presume you would want me reintegrate myself back in the pack and try to garner information?"

"That was my overall idea yes."

"It would take months or years to build up the trust you need to get the information that is most useful." Remus explained. "But as someone there who is looking out for their interest, helping them

legitimately to find a better life, I think I would be much more successful. Understand that as Mr. Delacour said, it is the werewolves who come first, not the information they may have against Voldemort."

Dumbledore looked disappointed but nodded at Lupin.

"Maybe your country can start zinking about better laws in regards to ze werewolves as well."

"With the current makeup in government, it would never happen." Dumbledore replied as he sat back in his chair. "Most of the population consider werewolves dark creatures and automatically align them with Voldemort. Any softening of the laws would trigger a political backlash at this time."

"Most of ze population.." Alain murmured to himself before looking at the Ancient Wizard behind the desk. "Ow long 'ave you been 'eadmaster 'ere Professor Dumbledore?"

"Twenty-five years, but what does that have to do with anything?"

"You've 'ad twenty-five years to change ze opinions of ze students who learn at zis school." Alain stated bluntly. "Tell me, 'ave you put any effort at all in ensuring zat particular subject is taught in a more enlightening manner?"

"It's not that simple Alain." Dumbledore replied. "There is only so much I can do."

"Sir, he did go to a lot of trouble to allow me to come to this school." Remus interjected.

"Non, he allowed Remus Lupin to attend zis school oui." Alain said. "And he went to great lengths to protect the student body, but he did not allow Remus Lupin the werewolf to come. 'E 'id your condition from ze school, it's not ze same."

"I did what I could." Dumbledore said. "Would it have been better not to have invited Remus at all?"

"Non, but I'm saying you 'ave done very little but seem to claim a lot of credit for what you 'ave done."

"Ok, that's enough." Remus interjected in the argument between the two men he admired the most. "We are all on the same side, and I think since we are all very concerned for Harry, we are all committed to the fight against Voldemort."

"I will 'elp ze young man anyway I can." Alain admitted. "E is my family."

"Then let's concentrate on Harry ok?" Remus suggested. He looked at Dumbledore. "From the people I contacted last night, I presume the Order is being reactivated?"

"Yes." Dumbledore replied. "And a lot of things that need to be done."

"Anything I can 'elp with?" Mr. Delacour asked.

"You discussed the matter with your Minister last night? What are his plans?"

Alain shrugged. "My Minister is wary at ze moment. 'E wants to see what ze English Ministry does. 'E 'as no intentions of fighting zis war for zis country. If you require something specific, 'e might be able to 'elp. I did 'ave to explain about 'Arry and my daughters so 'e would understand why the young man is coming to France this summer."

Dumbledore nodded his understanding. The international community had stayed out of the conflict the last time Voldemort had rose in power. Some countries out of fear, but a lot because they felt the English government and magical society had brought the darkness upon themselves. Unfortunately he had to admit that there has not been much improvement over those years. He just hoped they could keep one step ahead of Riddle while they tried to find his horcruxes.

The meeting lasted for a few more minutes before breaking up. Sirius had made plans to meet Harry during the night and after getting Buckbeak out of the castle, he would take off for parts unknown. Though the capture of Pettigrew gave him hope, there was still a lot of Aurors looking for him, not to mention the Dementors. He would return either when Harry made it to the Delacours or when the Ministry was ready to conduct his trial. Dumbledore and Alain set up a signal that would be in an ad in the

Daily Prophet if either were to happen. He again thanked Alain for all he had done for Harry and for the emergency portkey he still had in his pocket.

"No need to zank me."

A short time later Remus and Alain left Dumbledore's office and started down the revolving staircase. As they descended Remus turned to Alain and said. "Sir, I think you were a little harsh on Dumbledore, he really has been trying."

Alain sighed. "Maybe so, but trying does no good without results." They got off the stairs and started down the hallway before the French politician spoke again. "Dumbledore is 'Eadmaster of ze zis magical school. 'E is also Chief Warlock of your Wizengamut, two of ze most influential positions in zis country. Ze people believe 'im to be almost a deity, but nothing 'as changed. With as much political power as ze man 'as, something should 'ave changed if 'e truly wanted zem to."

Remus was stunned. He really hadn't thought of that before. What had Dumbledore done over the last decade. He could have easily stepped in as Minister five years ago, but quietly refused even being considered, even though everyone knew that Fudge was an inept and weak minded politician fronting some powerful people.

Alain saw the troubled look upon Lupin's face. "I do not zink he 'asn't tried some." He said. "But I do zink 'e tries to do too much. Even now he is planning on leading ze people against Voldemort while still doing everything else." He stopped and looked at the werewolf. "Zere is only so much a single man can do. Only so many 'ours in a day, but 'e insists on doing everything 'imself. It's almost like 'e doesn't trust anyone." He frowned as he remembered something from the previous night. "Yet 'e says 'e trusts a former Death Eater with 'is life. Tell me Remus, do you know why Dumbledore trusts Severus Snape as much as 'e does?"

"Severus spied for our side against Voldemort. It was only his personal vouching that allowed Severus to not be convicted at his trial." Remus replied. "Almost immediately after that day, he was offered the position of Potion's Master."

Alain frowned. "Would you ever trust someone who betrayed 'is old master? A man willing to switch sides in ze middle of a conflict is likely to switch back at anytime."

"Albus always said that Severus had good reasons for going against Voldemort."

"Did 'e ever say what zose reasons were?"

"No..only that he was satisfied with them."

Alain Delacour shook his head and a few word of french were uttered. "Sorry my friend, but ze man 'olds to many secrets and expects everyone to just trust 'im zat 'e knows best."

"He usually does."

"Unfortunately I 'ave not been zat impressed. Ze whole matter of ze tournament and Moody, of many zings over ze years. Of ze way 'e 'as treated 'Arry." Alain smiled at Lupin. "I know 'e 'as been good to you. Just be careful. Don't follow 'im blindly. Even ze best of men can make ze worst of mistakes. And you know zat when great men make mistakes, people usually die."

Remus nodded thoughtfully at him.

"Good, now Apolline is waiting to 'ave lunch. Would you like to go with us to ze zree broomsticks?"

"If you're sure I wouldn't be taking time away from you and your wife, I'd be happy too."

Back in Dumbledore's office, he had turned his Floo back on and had just sat down at his desk to work on the many issues that needed his attention when the floo flared and the voice of Molly Weasley boomed out.

"DUMBLEDORE... is it true? Arthur is getting conflicting answers at work. Is You-Know-Who really back? Did all the stuff in the Prophet happen? How's Harry? Did he really get hit with a killing curse again? Oh the poor dear." Her questions poured forth without a chance for Albus to get a word in.

Finally the head of Molly Weasley stopped with her questions and Dumbledore replied in a very tired voice. "Yes Molly. I hate to say it, but Voldemort has returned. The accounts in the Prophet were more or less accurate. Harry is fine and yes he did survive getting hit with a killing curse again."

"That poor dear." Mrs. Weasley said. "You get him to the Burrow as soon as you can this year Albus. Oh the poor boy." she repeated. "Maybe I should come up there today? He's probably so distraught."

"I'm sorry Molly but I don't think you need to be concerned about the young man."

"Of course I do." Molly exclaimed. 'He's..he's like my son. He's been so confused this year. Maybe you can let him leave school early and come here for the summer."

"Molly, I know he has other plans for this summer." Dumbledore replied. "Currently he was not planning on coming to the Burrow, but I shall ask to see if he wishes too now."

"He said that same nonsense yesterday as well." Molly admitted. "Obviously it's the influence of that...that girl. Did you know he even said he was going to spend the summer with her?"

Dumbledore sighed. He knew Molly Weasley wasn't usually this biased. She liked Remus Lupin and of course Blood Purity meant nothing to her, but for some reason she has always believed the witch's tales of Veela. He could only guess that it came from the articles that would appear in the magazines like Witch Weekly and the numerous romance novels that she read, many of which had plots of Veela stealing lovers away. He also remembered that Celestina Warbeck was her favorite singer and one of her all time popular songs had been 'Guard your Wizard's Heart' which has a few lines dealing with Veela as well.

"Molly." Dumbledore said. "Right now Voldemort is a much bigger issue to deal with, but if you really care about Harry, you really need to think about what you are saying. You did read the part about Fleur Delacour being instrumental in saving Harry's life didn't you?"

"Nonsense." Molly sniffed. "It was probably her fault he was there. The poor boy was probably under her influence when he jumped in front of that curse too. You have to do something about it Albus."

"I can only tell you that you are wrong." Dumbledore replied. "But I will not discuss it any further though. Please let Arthur know what I have said about the Voldemort. I am organizing the Order again. Good day Molly." And with a flick of his wand he closed the floo connection. He shook his head as he considered Molly Weasley. He knew she was a very loyal motherly person. But he also knew that when she believed something to be true, it was very difficult to get her to change her mind.

He looked at the pile of paperwork again and sighed. He was about to start on one of them when again the Floo lit brilliant green again and the head of Cornelius Fudge could be seen.

"Dumbledore?"

"Yes Cornelius?" The Headmaster again answered wearily.

"Why haven't you contacted me?"

"I thought when you left last evening it was very evident you didn't want me to contact you."

"No, no." Fudge replied. "I mean from this morning. I asked Dolores to contact you two hours ago."

"I'm sorry, but I haven't heard a word from Madam Umbridge." Dumbledore replied.

"Odd. Well never mind her." The Minister of Magic said. "Look, I uh.. about last night..." Fudge stammered.

"Yes Minister?"

"Blast it Dumbledore, you were right. There I admitted it." Fudge said.

Dumbledore nodded graciously at the fireplace. "Truthfully Cornelius, I truly wished I hadn't been."

"About uh You-Know-Who. What should we do? I mean what can we, I mean I.." Fudge looked panicked.

"We were very fortunate last night Minister." Dumbledore replied. "It seems his original plan would have been for him to resurrect himself with no one but his supporters knowing about it. We were suppose to have wasted a lot of time looking for Harry Potter while he quietly built up his power. As you know he failed at many levels."

"Yes. I can see we were fortunate but what do I do?" The Minister almost pleaded.

"Do what you did last night." Dumbledore suggested. "This is a matter for Magical Law Enforcement so turn the entire investigation over to Madam Bones. Ask her what she needs to do it successfully and help her get it. Then tell the public the truth."

"Yes, that might work." Fudge replied but still looking very nervous. "About young Mr. Potter. Is there any chance he would be willing to pay a visit to my office?"

"I do not know." Dumbledore admitted as he sat back in his chair. "Though if you wish to start making a path toward young Mr. Potter, it starts with Sirius Black."

"He... was it really Pettigrew?" Fudge asked. "How can that be?"

"Yes it was though I am sure Madam Bones has relayed that to you already."

"But how? I mean really he was a rat? For twelve years?"

"Yes." Dumbledore replied. "I was fooled as well Cornelius, remember that it was I who originally told the Ministry that it was Sirius who was Potter's secret keeper."

"But it..."

"Cornelius, remember that is was not you who originally did the injustice. The main culprit was Bary Crouch Sr and according to the testimony of his son, he is now dead. If you need to pass the blame for this, then do so, but for now just call off the Dementors."

"I already have, I had Dolores..." Fudge's head in the fireplace looked noticeably more nervous. "Maybe I better check with Amelia to make sure she got that message."

"By all means Cornelius." Dumbledore replied.

*** E E ***

End of year testing was still going on for Hermione and Gabrielle. Though reluctant to leave Harry, they finally departed for their classes. Transfiguration for Hermione while Gabrielle left for Charms. Fleur was studying for the French Equivalent of the NEWTs but she grabbed a couple of her textbooks from her room and sat next to Harry under one of the large trees near the lake.

Harry didn't want to think about the prophecy and what it meant, so he kept his mind off of it by staring at his oldest Bondmate. Her magic had made the scratches that had adorned her face the previous evening disappear. He watched as her blue eyes moved as she read her text, occasionally marking a passage with her quill. Ever so often she'd look up only to find Harry's eyes on her.

"Ow am I suppose to study with you staring at me?" She asked smiling.

"How can I not stare when you're there in front of me?" He returned.

Their eyes stayed locked together. They didn't need to verbalize or even think what they each needed to say, it was clear what the eyes of the other was communicating. Love, respect and other many things that had no words, but was clearly felt. As the experience with the Troll in the first year cemented a relationship with Hermione, the previous night meant something to Harry and Fleur.

"Maybe we could go to my room?" Fleur suggested.

Harry wanted nothing more than to kiss her and to hold her but it was not to be for now. "Hermione would kill us. If she were to miss a question because we distracted her..."

Fleur laughed. A sound Harry loved to hear. A sounds that washed away the pain and fears of the past day. It was a contagious laugh as well, and soon the two of them couldn't help but start the other

giggling by just looking at them. Soon a shadow fell over them and the laughter stopped immediately with both of them having their hands on their wands before even turning around. Cedric stood there, a copy of the Daily Prophet in his hands.

"Sorry." He said. "I didn't mean to interrupt you. I can come back if you want me too."

"Zat's fine Cedric. 'Ave a seat." Fleur replied.

Cedric sat down on the ground across from them and the three of them sat in silence for a short time until Cedric nodded at the paper and asked. "Did it all happen? I mean, I know what Professor Dumbledore tried to tell the Minister but..."

Harry looked at the older Hogwarts Champion and shrugged. "Yeah, mostly like that."

Cedric looked at Fleur, "I'm glad you made it to him." He turned his gaze to Harry. "She was ready to fight her way back out of the maze to get to you. If Dumbledore's phoenix hadn't shown up..."

Cedric watched the two look at each other as if they were talking. Finally he remembered what Fleur had said the night before. "So.. you two can really...eh I mean talk in your heads?"

Harry's eyebrow went up in question as he queried Fleur. She spoke out loud when she replied. "I was nervous and rambling about you love. I 'ad to explain 'ow I knew what was 'appening to you."

"When she first started I thought she was losing it." Cedric admitted. "Had me believing we were the ones in danger."

Harry looked over at Cedric. "Yeah we can. Good thing too or who knows what might have happened last night."

Cedric took a few seconds to digest the information before asking the obvious question. "So if you two are.. what did you call it last night?"

"Bondmates." Fleur replied.

"So if you are bondmates or married or whatever it is with Fleur, then why are you pretending to date her sister Harry?"

Harry looked at Fleur. "Maybe we should just announce it now. It's becoming pretty widely known anyway."

"Non, no one knows we don't trust." Fleur replied. "Zink about ze next week if ze people you don't like find out."

"True." Harry agreed and then turned to Cedric. "Ok, it's a secret until later in the summer ok?"

"Sure Harry." Cedric replied. "I hope you know I'd never go behind you."

"Not even Cho can know Cedric." Fleur stated.

"Why?"

"I like Cho, but she likes to..to gossip. Especially wiz 'er friend." Fleur explained.

Cedric nodded he understood. He had heard Cho and Marietta Edgecombe chatting a few times about various people, some of it not so flattering.

Harry looked at Fleur and smiled before bringing his eyes back to Cedric. "Do you remember after the second task when none of us were around?"

"Yeah I heard later you were magically exhausted from everything."

"I was but while I was recovering, we, I mean Fleur, Gabrielle and I, spent a lot of time together." Harry explained. "I fell in love with both of them." Harry looked at Fleur as he said the little lie. "And they did the same with me. Veela have something called bondmates. Its...It's a bond that connects the people in love by their love. To a Veela it seems it's very much like a marriage or at least a permanent connection. Well they both bonded their love to me."

Cedric was just looking at Harry and Fleur. Finally he asked. "So you're married to both of them?"

"It's not a real marriage." Fleur replied. "But to Gabrielle and I, it's ze same. Someday maybe zey'll be a real wedding."

"Wow, I don't know what to say besides I wish you two or I guess I should say three, the best then." Cedric said. "So you've been hiding it because..."

"Skeeter, Slytherins, bunches of reasons." Harry replied. "We originally had planned to announce it over the summer to let people get it out of their system before the next school year but now.." Harry shrugged. "Hopefully they have a lot more things to be worried about besides my love life."

Cedric nodded at the paper laying in front of him. "Can you tell me anything about that? I will understand if you don't want to talk about it."

Harry again shrugged. "Nothing else really to tell actually. The cup was a trap." He looked at Cedric with an extremely serious look. "Can't help but think what might have happened if you had taken the cup while we were arguing."

"Guess it pays to be a Hufflepuff." Cedric replied. "Though I wouldn't have minded helping you."

"Thanks. I wished I had had help." Harry replied. He looked at Fleur. "But Fleur saved me. Risked her life to help me get free."

"You actually fought You-Know-Who?"

"I tried." Harry replied. "I got lucky when he.. well wasn't expecting me to be alive."

"So you really did survive.." Cedric nodded at the paper again to finish the sentence for him.

Harry looked again at Fleur. He could feel her emotions. He knew she was thinking about him dying again. He turned back to Cedric and again shrugged his shoulders. "I'm alive, but I'd prefer not to talk about that. It's.." He looked again at Fleur. "still not something we want to share."

Cedric smiled at the two of them as he got to his feet. "I understand. Look, if you ever need anything..." He held out his hand to Harry.

"Thanks Cedric." Harry replied and shook the older boy's hand.

Cedric turned to walk away and then stopped and turned back. "Hey, you'll invite me to the wedding when it does happen won't you?"

Fleur smiled. "Of course."

Harry thought about what he didn't tell Cedric, specifically about Hermione. "Cedric, when the story does come out, they'll be one other detail we didn't tell you. I hope you'll understand."

"Of course Harry. It's your life."

Unfortunately people seeing Cedric talking to them opened the floodgate and other students started coming by and trying to make small talk with Harry. Some wishing him well, while others wanted to ask about the battle the previous night. A lot of them brought up his surviving the killing curse again. This forced Harry and Fleur to abandon the tree and retreat to Fleur's room.

An short time later Hermione's voice made it's way into Harry's head. "Love, Ron wants to talk to you. He said he wants to apologize."

"What do you think?"

"I don't know, he sounds sincere but..."

Harry shook his head as he thought about the person he considered his best friend. "Just like the first task isn't it?"

"I really don't know Harry. It's all different now, back then I was trying to see both sides but now I know he's been wrong."

"OK. Tell him that you'll tell me when you see me."

"Already have."

"Love you."

The twins organized the party for that night and Harry and his bondmates really thought Gryffindor tower and the school in general could use it after the news from the previous night so this time they did not object. Shortly after they arrived Harry noticed Ron over in the corner occasionally looking at him. Finally Harry knew it was time to talk to his old friend. Went over and tapped him on the shoulder and nodded toward the steps. Shortly the two of them were in the fifth year boys room.

Harry sat on his bed and stared at his red headed friend waiting for the apology. Ron had a nervous look about him and paced until finally.

"Harry I..look maybe I was wrong."

"Maybe?" Harry asked.

"I was just trying to look out for you. I thought, you know, the Veela were..."

"And I told you you were wrong." Harry replied testily. "You made a choice but more than that Ron you didn't believe me. That's twice this year that you refuse to believe me when I told you the truth, this time you even made it worse by writing your mother."

"I'm trying to apologize for that." Ron exclaimed. "I was wrong and I'm sorry."

"You don't get it do you?" Harry queried his friend. "A simple I'm sorry doesn't do it. What would make me think you wouldn't do it again. Look I really need to know that my friends are really my friends Ron." Harry lowered his voice since it had been constantly rising. "Let it be for now, there's going to be a few more things that might cause problems over the summer. So we'll talk then or when school starts back in September."

Ron ears were red and he was looking at the floor as he mumbled something.

"What?" Harry asked.

"Nothing." Ron replied as he got up and left the room.

Harry just shook his head as he watched Ron leave. As he thought back over the last few months, Harry had to admit, that he really hadn't missed his friend that much. At first he had, since Ron had been a mostly constant companion for over three years, a connection to the Weasley family, but now Harry had his own family and he wasn't sure exactly where Ron would fit. The thought of friendship made Harry remembered the favor his mother had asked of him.

A couple of minutes later he was back in the party and he found a dark haired young man sitting by himself watching everyone else. Harry sat down beside him and said. "How is everything Neville..."

*** E E ***

Later that night, Harry and Hermione snuck out of the Gryffindor Tower under the invisibility cloak. Though they had cleared their plans with McGonagall and Flitwick, there were other people they wished to avoid. Snape and Filch were at the top of that list. They made their way outside and by use of the Marauder's map found who they were looking for. They waited silently as they watched the map and the large beetle. Finally Hermione ducked out from under the cloak and made her way over.

"Hello Rita." she said. "No..stay in your beetle form. I'll take you."

The beetle took flight and landed on Hermione's shoulder and the two of them set off for the Whomping Willow. Harry stayed under his cloak and followed. He kept watch on the map to make sure they weren't followed.

Soon they approached the Whomping Willow. Hermione levitated a small branch and made it touch the knot on the tree. When the branches had stopped moving, she quickly climbed into the small opening at the base of the tree. Harry followed quietly behind them. Soon they were in the Shrieking Shack. Hermione made her way into the small bedroom that brought back memories of the previous year. Sitting in the middle of the room were two chairs.

"Here's where it will happen." Hermione said. when the Prophet reporter had transformed back into her normal middle aged self, Hermione cast a few spells. Finally satisfied, she said. "No locating spells on her." At those words, from another room came Sirius Black.

"Here's your interview Rita." Hermione said.

Rita saw the man enter the room and asked. "Sirius Black?"

"You know it's me Skeeter." The man said grumpily. "Now let's get this going so I can get out of here."

"By all means." The reporter said as she reached into her bag and pulled out parchment and a quill. "Before we begin, did you know the order to be kissed on sight has been lifted?"

"No." Sirius replied as a bit of tension could be seen leaving his face. "Are you sure?"

"The paper will be publishing it on the front page tomorrow. That's why I wanted the interview tonight. It will go well with that news."

Sirius only nodded and then said. "Well let's get this over with. I have places to go."

"Very well." Rita replied. "For the first question tell me why everyone thought you were the Potter's secret keeper."

"To answer that you have to understand..." Sirius and Rita started what would end up being an hour long interview.

While the interview itself was going on, Harry slipped back out and met up with Fleur and Gabrielle. Soon they were headed for Myrtle's bathroom to help in the release of Buckbeak.

"I wonder." Harry murmured out loud.

"What?" Gabrielle asked.

"Oh, I was just thinking that if the piece of Voldemort soul gave me the parseltongue ability, if I've lost it now?"

"Zat..zat is unlikely." Fleur said.

"Why?" Harry asked. "Dumbledore said it was that which gave me the power in the first place."

"Yes, but.." She stopped to explain further. "Ze bond. Ze Veela magic. It has been protecting you from ze piece of 'is soul zat was in you."

Harry smiled as he realized what she was saying, "But I've still been able to use parseltongue."

"Exactly." Fleur responded as she started walking again. "Zere is a quick test zough." She said. She turned away from him so he could not see her lips and said "Open." then turning back to Harry she asked. "Did you 'ear zat?"

"Of course but why did.. you said that in parseltongue didn't you?" Harry asked.

Fleur smiled at him before she replied. "I zink zat proves you still are a parseltongue, non?"

Gabrielle remained in the bathroom as a lookout while Fleur and Harry descended into the chamber. They banished the table and chairs, and packed up the tent. They secured the room that had all the Basilisk ingredients that they had Moony store for them and with a final look around they they led Buckbeak out and up the stairs which was much easier said than done, but after a struggle they finally managed to coax the noble animal up them.

Once again the window had been banished and no Filch or other unwelcome people were around as Harry and Gabrielle climbed aboard the Hippogriff and took off for the outskirts of the forbidden forest.

"We're on Buckbeak." Harry said to Hermione.

"I'll let Sirius know. He's tired of Skeeter."

"We'll meet you where we agreed."

Gabrielle was happy. As she held tight to Harry she could feel her charm bracelet on her wrist. She remembered the last time they had ridden Buckbeak in getting him in the castle. Her thoughts went to Harry and her life as it had changed in the last few months.

"Arry, can we just fly for a few minutes. It's very beautiful."

"Of course my Angel."

It was twenty minutes later before they landed the Hippogriff in the clearing. They had spent the time overflying Hogwarts and the lake. Hermione was already there with Sirius and Fleur had joined them as well. Once they had clambered off the Hippogriff, Sirius bowed and then climbed on Buckbeak's back. He looked down at his godson.

"Take care Harry. I'll see you in a few weeks at the Delacours if not earlier."

"You too Sirius." Harry replied. "And...thanks for everything."

"No. I actually owe you an apology." Sirius said. "Twice I've gone after Peter instead of watching over you."

"You did what needed to do Sirius." Harry replied. "If he had escaped last night, I'd have been really pissed at you."

Sirius grinned. "I still plan to make it up to you."

"No need."

"Maybe not, but I can sure as hell want too." Sirius replied. "Now if those relatives of yours do give you any problems..."

"I will deal wif zem if zey do." Fleur said with an intensity in her eyes.

Sirius gave the french witch a small bow. "Then I leave him in your more than capable hands." He looked at the other two witches as well. "In all of your hands." With that Buckbeak leapt into the air. Harry and the women he loved watched the two disappear into the night. To Harry and Hermione it brought back memories from a night a little more than a year ago. This time though, they weren't as concerned about him. With the Dementor's kiss order having been lifted, even if he was captured, he could escape if he wanted with the emergency Portkey.

"Rita will be back tomorrow night for your interview Harry." Hermione said finally.

Harry rolled his eyes as he replied. "Great, an ideal way to spend a Friday night."

"She's told me she's writing my apology tonight as well. She thought it would give more incentive for you tomorrow night."

Harry just shook his head. "You know, at least she's honest about it." They all knew that Rita would do what's best for Rita. Harry gave Hermione a smile. "It should also be incentive for her to write a pretty good apology as well." He grabbed her hand and brought it up to his lips before looking at her again. "You deserve it."

"It's just going to get lost in all the things about Sirius and Voldemort." She said.

"Non." Fleur said. "More people will be reading ze paper tomorrow zan ever before." Fleur put her arm around Hermione. "Zough no matter what, ze people who matter are right 'ere."

It had been another long day filled with emotions, of discoveries and of uncertain futures. Starting with the interview with Madam Bones, to the discussions with Dumbledore and finally ending with the saying goodbye to Sirius. Once again they decided the Room of Requirement was the place to sleep. It took a while to get there as they needed to avoid teachers and Peeves, while only being able to get two people under the invisibility cloak at a time. Finally late in the night they found themselves climbing into the same large bed as they had the previous night. This time Gabrielle found herself with Harry's arms. Though the young ladies quickly slipped into slumber, Harry found himself lying awake deep into the night. He kept thinking of the prophecy and what Fleur had said about bondmates suffering after the death of the other. He realized if he were back in his dorm he would have gone to the common room and spent time in front of the fireplace. The thought had barely left his mind before a cracking sound emerged and a faint glow appeared in the room. He wiggled free of the women surround him and look around. He found that a fireplace and a loveseat now existed in the room.

He crept slowly out of the bed trying to not disturb the women that shared it with him. Finally winning free he cross the room and settled onto the seat. As he stared into the yellowed flames and listened to the crackling of the fire he couldn't help but feel a sense of despair wash over him. He looked over toward the bed and in the flickering

light he could make out the blond hair of Gabrielle. "I finally thought I could be happy and now I'm going to cause the death of them." He thought. "How can I fight Voldemort and win?"

Again he turned toward the fire and buried himself further in his thoughts and sadness. He was so lost in those thought he didn't feel one of his bondmates wake up and walk over to him. He almost jumped out of his seat when Gabrielle wrapped her arms around him from behind and kissed him softly on the cheek.

"Mon amour." She said quietly. "Why do zis?"

"Do what?"

Gabrielle moved around the loveseat and sat down beside Harry and leaned her head on his shoulder. "You know what. You 'ave been sitting over 'ere believing zat you are...are going to die and cause all of us to die."

"It's true."

"You are just giving up zen?"

"Of course not!" Harry exclaimed in a loud whisper. "But..but how I mean what can I do?"

Gabrielle pulled back a little so her eyes to look into his. "Zere will be a way. Zere must." She said determinedly. "Zis is our trapdoor to our future." she held up her wrist that had the bracelet on it. "We 'ave a long way to go on our journey and we..will...find..a..way." Each of the last words were punctuated by her poking his chest with her finger.

Harry couldn't help by smile at her. He wrapped his arms around his youngest bondmate and pulled her into his arms. "Ok Angel, we'll find a way."

After a while the two of them rejoined Hermione and Fleur in the bed and this time Harry managed to drift off to sleep.

*** E E ***

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW with SIRIUS BLACK!

by Rita Skeeter

Last evening my dear readers, in pursuing the information you need, I met with none other than Sirius Black, the man the Ministry of Magic has been pursuing for two years. As I mentioned in my article yesterday this man who had been accused of betraying the Potters, who had been put in Azkaban for the murder of Peter Pettigrew and twelve muggles on a street in London, was part of the rescue of our own Boy-Who-Lived-Twice. Yesterday I raised the question of why Albus Dumbledore would call upon this man to aid in the rescue of the son of the very people he betrayed. Last night I found the answer to that question and more. In fact it appears this man has been the victim of the greatest miscarriage of justice imaginable. What would constitute such a declaration? Well in preparation for this interview I made a visit to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement for the records of Mr. Black's trial. No one in the Magical Records Division could find any trace of any file concerning the Trial of Sirius Black. In fact the only record they had on Sirius Black was a citation for public urination. Presuming that sometime in the past two years someone had removed the file to aid in Black's capture, I asked for the date of the trial so I could pull the the story from the Archives at the Daily Prophet. Again after an hour of searching their records, no one could find the entry for the trial. Infuriating but I just presumed the Ministry being the Ministry had just done a shoddy job of record keeping again. One of Mr. Black's first answers of the evening put to rest that presumption. "I was never given a trial." Mr. Black said when asked if he could provide the date of that event. "I was sent to Azkaban by Barty Crouch Sr. based purely on the erroneous information provided by Albus Dumbledore that I was the Potter's Secret Keeper." Yes my readers, as I eluded to yesterday, Sirius Black is innocent. He's a man who was left at the mercy of the Dementors of Azkaban for over twelve years.

As the story unfolded over the next hour, I learned that to further confuse the forces of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, Mr. Black convinced the Potters to use Peter Pettigrew as their secret-keeper when they went into hiding. That very admission brought the man I was interviewing near tears. Though he never betrayed his brother in all but name, he feels the guilt of the Potters' deaths as if he did.

So was it that guilt that brought Sirius Black to fight along side the force of light in the graveyard? No my readers, it wasn't the guilt, he was there to fight for the life of his godson. Yes my readers, I said his godson. Sirius Black is Harry Potter's godfather. Everything he has done since breaking out of Azkaban has been to protect the child of his long term friend. While the country, myself included, thought he had broken out of Azkaban to kill Harry Potter, I discovered he did it to save the young man. Though he wouldn't tell me how he escaped, he did let me know that he discovered that Pettigrew in a rat animagus form was in a position to cause the Boy-Who-Lived-Twice harm. Once he performed his miraculous escape, he proceeded to Hogwarts where he tried to apprehend the traitorous Pettigrew himself. A feat he managed but unfortunate circumstances and the untimely interference of Severus Snape (Potion's Master at Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry) allowed Pettigrew to escape once again.

I now call upon the Ministry to right the wrong they have done upon this man. Either hold a trial in an open court to rightfully determine his innocence, or admit outright that the man who you currently hold in custody and who has confessed to the crimes that were attributed to Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew is the guilty one. Proclaim the innocence of this man as you proclaimed his guilt. The Daily Prophet stands ready to assist in that announcement.

Expert opinions on how Black escaped from Azkaban. Pg 2

What the Ministry knew. Was there a cover-up? Page 4

Order of Merlin to be rescinded for Pettigrew. Page 5

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH HARRY POTTER SOON SO
SUBSCRIBE TODAY TO INSURE YOUR COPY OF THE
PROPHET.

That story took up the entire front page of the newspaper. The story was published around a picture of a much younger Sirius Black surrounded by the Potters on their wedding day. Lily Potter was in her wedding dress smiling and waving, James Potter wore dark dress robes and had a grin the size of Hogwarts plastered on his face. The younger Sirius had an arm around both of them with a large smile of his own.

"Wow." Harry murmured as he put down the paper. "Sirius might not even need a trial."

"E was never convicted." Fleur said. "Zere is enough evidence to allow your ministry to just proclaim 'is innocence."

"I wonder where we would have lived." Harry asked. His eyes hadn't left the picture in the middle of the story. The sadness that use to settle into his heart every time he saw his parents was surprisingly absent though.

"Where who would live?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, I was thinking if all of this had happened last year, and I had gotten to go live with Sirius, where it would have been." Harry said. "He's never mentioned if he has a home or even if any of his family is still alive."

"You know this will be the last time you ever go to that place again?" Hermione asked. "The Dursley's can rot for all I care Harry. So next summer or maybe even some of this summer you can live with him if the Ministry does the right thing."

"Only if there's room for three ladies I happen to be very much in love with." Harry said. Then another thought occurred to him. "Your apology." He said looking at Hermione. "Did she write it?"

Hermione's smiled and turned Harry's paper to page 2. In fairly large letters the headline at the top of the page announced.

A Reporter's apology to Hermione Granger

by Rita Skeeter

As I mentioned in an earlier article, I felt I needed to re-examine earlier stories where I relied heavily on the accounts of young Draco Malfoy, son of Lucius Malfoy. Due to that examination, I felt I needed to correct a serious inaccuracy and offer a heartfelt apology. There is a young Muggleborn student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry by the name of Hermione Granger. My readers will remember the name from an article I wrote in Witch Weekly accusing the young witch of possibly using love potions to ensnare the love of Victor Krum and Harry Potter. In that story I used very

unflattering quotes from young Malfoy and his friends about Miss Granger.

At this time, I, Rita Skeeter offer my most deepest, most heartfelt apology to her for that article and for the emotional pain the story caused her. I had a chance to speak to the young witch and found her to be intelligent, charming and very determined. Her support and friendship of Harry Potter, our valiant hero of the graveyard, has enabled him to overcome many challenges in his life. It is a friendship that has existed since their very first year at Hogwarts. In the coming times when our young Hero needs his friends above all else, I can guarantee that this young witch will be the first to stand by his side.

I call upon my readers to help me in correcting the wrong I imposed on the young lady. I ask that you thank her for her friendship and unwavering support of our Hero.

"Heartfelt?" Harry questioned. "She has a heart?"

"One directly attached to her ego." Hermione replied as she spread honey on a biscuit before taking a bite.

"And 'er moneybag?"

"Exactly. She's expecting a hefty bonus for your interview tonight. Harry."

"Do I really have to talk to her?" Harry asked.

"Oui." Fleur replied. "Eet won't be zat bad, and we'll be zere with you. Besides she will eventually be writing about us and we want 'er to keep writing stories like zat." she nodded at the front page of the paper.

"Yeah fine." Harry muttered as he stabbed at his food. The last thing he wanted to do was talk to Rita about the questions she was going to ask.

"At least it will be better than the article she wrote about Professor Dumbledore." Hermione said. She turned the prophet to page three where someone had drawn an animated cartoon of Dumbledore putting his head up his backside while another image kept

transforming between Barty Crouch Jr. and Alastor Moody depending on where Dumbledore's head was.

The article went to details of how Barty Crouch Jr. had been able to polyjuice himself as the famous auror Alastor Moody for a whole year under the very large nose of Albus Dumbledore. Rita held nothing back as she ridiculed the Headmaster. She made it sound like Dumbledore should have noticed Crouch Jr the very night he showed up at the castle. She pointed out events that in hindsight made it odd that Dumbledore didn't realized what was going on.

"I hope so." Harry replied as he watched the animated Dumbledore once again bend at the waist and twist his body in a fashion that was biologically impossible before completing the insertion once again. "I sure hope so."

A/N: I'm sure this has been discussed a lot, but I just realized the prophecy was wrong. It said 'must die at the hand of the other', but Voldemort died by his own hand on a rebounded curse. So did he thrice defy himself? He was his own equal. hmmm... Make a nice one shot of Harry talking to Dumbledore's portrait after the battle.

Chapter 33

Jun 26 1995 continued

Dumbledore was staring out the window of his office. The view allowed him to see the lawn far below and currently students milled around after a day of end-of-year tests. In the distance he saw a group of four young people walking and knew from the color of their hair who they were. As he watched Harry and the young ladies who were bonded to him he felt a sense of regret and of pride. Dumbledore really did consider Lily and James Potter amongst his friends and it appeared from Harry's encounter with them that they held no grudge against him. He thought again of the night he left young Harry on the Dursley's doorstep. He still had the memories of the bondscene that showed the abuse Harry suffered there. He hadn't returned to those memories once the bonding had been completed until that morning. Though he truly could not bring himself to allow the Dursleys to fall to Voldemort and his Death Eaters, he was glad that Alain Delacour would be arranging matters there.

A motion on his desk broke his concentration and he glanced toward it. The Daily Prophet was there and it was open to the story of Crouch Jr masquerading as Moody. The motion that had caught his eye was the drawing of himself and Crouch. Though Dumbledore enjoyed a good laugh at some of the things written about him, this article had hit very close to home. That Barty Crouch Jr. could fool him for an entire year seemed impossible, but yet it had happened. His thoughts turned to the conversation with Alain Delacour once more and after a few minutes a small silver device broke his reverie as it started emitting a sound that sounded very much like a burp. He glanced at a clock that hung on his wall and knew it was time to leave. He had to address the International Confederation of Wizards later about the return of Voldemort. He secured his Pensieve into traveling bag wishing once again it could be shrunk and lightened but the magic that imbued the unique device prevented it.

Three hours later a weary Dumbledore concluded his briefing to the Witches and Wizards of the ICW. He had displayed several memories to show the return of the Dark Lord and then gave a request to his colleagues.

"Though Magical Great Britain does not request world assistance as of yet, we do ask that you do your best to prevent Voldemort from

gaining resources from your respective countries." Dumbledore paused for a few moments and then finished his speech. "Finally I wish to announce my resignation from the position of Supreme Mugwump of this astute organization." This caused an cacophony of voices and yells throughout the chamber. Dumbledore finally requested quiet and the noise settled. "Recently I was reminded that time is something we all crave but never have enough of. I feel I need to spend more of my time dealing with the troubles in my country. I ask only that you choose my replacement well for it is imperative that the spread of darkness be contained." He looked around the chamber one last time and then he stood up from the Supreme Mugwump's chair and walked briskly out of the room.

**** E E ****

Harry's interview with Rita Skeeter went much better than he had imagined. With Fleur and Hermione guiding Skeeter to the appropriate questions and cutting her off when she asked one that they knew Harry didn't want to answer, the time wasn't nearly as bad as Harry imagined it would be. Finally the last question was asked.

"Harry, I appreciate your time this evening and hope we can follow up some time in the future, but for now do you have anything that you would like to say directly to the readers."

As Harry contemplated his answer, his thoughts roamed back to a conversation he had with Alain Delacour when he had approached the politician for advice. Alain had asked Harry what he really wanted from the interview.

"Actually sir, I just want to be left alone." Harry had replied. "I just want to be Harry."

Mr. Delacour had studied Harry for a short time before he grimaced and replied. "Son, I wish you could get what you want, but I zink you know it won't 'appen. You are 'Arry Potter, ze boy-who-lived and ze banisher of Voldemort. Zough you might not 'ave deserved ze attention when you were an infant, your feats ze other night are all your own. You once again faced down and drove off ze Dark Lord while surviving another killing curse. You selflessly threw yourself in front of it in fact to save someone." Alain's hand came down and rested on Harry's shoulder. "To ze people you are a 'ero..."

"Not really." Harry said. "You, Mooney and Dumbledore were there. Voldemort knew he had to leave. Besides, the only reason I was able to hit him was because he didn't expect me to be alive."

"Don't sell yourself short 'Arry. Remus and I were trying to stop 'im ze whole time you were...out of it shall we say. Even with 'im suffering in extreme pain, 'e was still able to block our spells. It was your spell zat forced 'im to flee as quickly as 'e did." Alain gave Harry's shoulder a slight squeeze. "You are a very powerful wizard 'Arry. I could not drive zat many Dementors away, nor could I slice an Acromantula in half with a single spell."

"It was less than half." Harry mumbled. "I only took off a part with a couple of legs."

Alain chuckled. "Nor could I do even zat much. Zough speaking of your magical abilities, I still plan on arranging some instructions for you and ze others zis summer when you're with us."

"What type of instructions?" Harry asked. "I mean I can't do magic when I'm there can I?"

"Of course you'll be able to. Zere are certain advantages to being bondmate to my daughters. One of zose is I can take care of zings on ze government side. As for what it will be, I 'ave something in mind, but let's get you to France before we discuss it, oui?"

"Thank you sir." Harry replied.

"We'll see 'ow zankful you are when you're hot sweaty and tired zis summer." Alain said with a smile.

"It will still be better than my previous summers. I've always been hot, sweaty and tired, but now at least I will have..."

"My daughters including 'Ermione?" Mr. Delacour replied and again smiled when Harry blushed and nodded.

"Yes, I imagine so. As for your previous summers, I will be taking you from ze train station to your Aunt and Uncle's 'ome."

"Why?"

Alain eyes developed a small twinkle. "I just wish to introduce myself...properly. I do not know why Dumbledore did not do more to insure a better life for you, but I will make sure zey understand."

"Yes sir." Harry replied.

"Now as I was saying to ze people you are a 'ero." Alain said. "Whether you want it or not, you represent ze fight against Voldemort. You're a...a figurehead is a good word. Ze people are going to look to you and ze interview will be ze start of 'ow zey perceive you. If you tell zem it was luck and not accept zat you did anything against Voldemort, zen ze people might lose 'ope zat 'e can ever be beat and if people lose 'ope, zey can never win."

Harry's stomach churned at those words, but he knew Fleur and Gabrielle's father was right.

Harry was still looking at Rita Skeeter as his mind returned to the present and the ending question. He swallowed and finally replied. "I want the people to know that though I don't think I'm any kind of hero, I do believe Voldemort can be beaten. He is but a man who also went to Hogwarts fifty years ago. A man who though gifted magically can not win if the Witches and Wizards of this country come together to oppose him and his followers. His real name is Tom Marvolo Riddle." Harry looked over at Fleur who had taught him along with Hermione and Gabrielle the Flagrate spell. She quickly did the same routine as Riddle's soul fragment had done in front of Harry.

"For all that he says he stands for, he is a half blood. His father was a muggle." Hermione added.

Rita Skeeter was amazed at the calmness Harry Potter and the young ladies were when mentioning the Dark Lord by name. Her quill was busy writing as quickly as she could. Though she was uncertain if she wanted to address the Voldemort being a half-blood issue since it could cause a backlash from the Dark Lord himself, she wasn't about to not write about the look in Harry Potter's eyes as he calmly discussed him by name.

"Yes, well thank you Mr. Potter." she finally said as she stood up. A bit of curiosity came over her and she asked. "You mentioned you found the Chamber of Secrets in your second year." Harry had

glossed over a lot of the issue with Riddle in the Chamber since questions of the Horcrux might have arisen. He only suggested Riddle had possessed Ginny Weasley like he had Quirrell. "Could you show it to me?"

Harry looked at his bondmates and a quick discussion was had. Finally he looked back at the Reporter and responded. "I can, if you will apologize to Tom Riddle's first victim."

"How do I apologize to someone who is dead?" Skeeter asked.

"You know her by another name. Moaning Myrtle." Hermione replied.

"Myrtle? The ghost in the toilet?"

"She was killed by a sixteen year old Tom Riddle fifty years ago." Harry stated. "In fact it might be a good story to recount her murder. I do not know if her parents are still alive, but if they are you can ask them and Myrtle if it's something they wished done."

Skeeter was once again envisioning the story "The Birth of the Dark Lord!" in her mind. She could already see the words forming in her mind for a tearjerker story about a young woman whose life was cut short by a young man destined to lead the wizarding world into darkness. After she agreed and they had started toward a second floor bathroom she thought once again how being captured by these young teens had turned into the best day of her life.

The apology to Myrtle sounded remorseful and the ghost accepted it with glee. Harry had never seen the young ghost as happy as she was having Skeeter apologizing to her. She also readily agreed to being interviewed and the story. "I can't wait for Olive Hornby to read it. You will make sure you write that it was her fault that I was in here won't you?"

"Of course." Rita replied.

The tour of the Chamber didn't take long and they did not take Skeeter into the hidden rooms. Finally they escorted the Daily Prophet reporter back to the castle lawn.

"Now Mr. Potter, I know that the readers of Witch Weekly are going to want to know all about your girlfriend. I've received several owls

already wanting to know more." Skeeter said. She turned to Gabrielle. "Young lady, I'd like to interview you sometime. My readers want to know everything that made the Boy-Who-Lived fall for you."

Another silent discussion happened as Rita waited finally the youngest bondmate responded. "In ze summer. We'll let you know when. Zough, I 'ave a friend who's father owns a magazine and I might want it written for eet."

"Which magazine does he own?" Rita asked. "I'm familiar with most of them and can start negotiating when they already have the story."

"It's ze Quibbler." Gabrielle replied.

Rita's expression went blank as she stared at the young french girl. She had to fight down a retort about the magazine. "You're friends with Xenophilus Lovegood's daughter?"

"Yes, Luna is a very good friend."

"Mr. Lovegood doesn't publish articles like that." Skeeter argued desperately.

"I'll ask Luna and let you know." Gabrielle replied.

"Yes, well I'll await your owl." Skeeter said as she turned around and walked away shaking her head softly. The bonded could hear the word "Quibbler" several times.

*** E E ***

"Lucius." The cold high voice said to the blond Death Eater who knelt before his master. "Tell me why I shouldn't kill you Lucius."

"I've been nothing but faithful My Lord." Malfoy said as he stared at the floor.

"Faithful? Faithful enough to come find me when I needed you the most?" Voldemort said softly but in a voice that chilled the very air Lucius breathed.

"My Lord, I had no idea where to find you...I swear."

"You with all of your gold couldn't do what that weak minded rat was able to do?" Voldemort asked.

Lucius Malfoy had no reply, so all he could do was remain silent.

"Then you gave the thing I told you to protect with your life to some silly girl in hopes of changing a law?"

Sweat now beaded on the brow of the Death Eater. The silence in the room was deafening. He couldn't even hear the shuffling footsteps of the two muggles that had been imperiused to serve his master. In fact the only sounds was those of his own breath and heartbeat.

"Faithful." The word hung in the air. "And now...now because of your foolishness I was forced to flee your home. Tell me Lucius, what did you tell the Ministry to gain your freedom? How faithful were you when you were questioned?"

"No...nothing my Lord." Lucius stuttered. "I...did tell them about you appearing but I...I was given veritaserum."

"We shall see." The Dark Lord replied. "Now look at me Lucius, open your mind to me."

Twenty minutes later Lucius was lying on the floor crying as pain like he had never known before shot through his head. His master had been most brutal in the mental interrogation.

"What DID YOU TELL THEM!" Voldemort screamed out. "What memory were they trying to hide from me."

"Nothing my Lord." Lucius cried. "I...I would never betray you. Please, you must believe me."

"Must? I must believe because why? Because you have been so FAITHFUL?" The Dark Lord said as his wand came up again. "Legilimens." Deeper he dug into the memories of his servant. He fed more and more power to break the memory modification that he was positive had occurred. Ignoring the screams of his servant he continued the assault. He thought he'd done it when he felt the memory of Lucius sitting alone in a room shatter only to be replaced

by...nothingness. Voldemort found himself staring into the vacant cold grey eyes of a very dead Lucius Malfoy.

Voldemort sat back in his throne as he studied the dead body in front of him callously. Though no regrets or remorse would ever be felt by him, he was annoyed by the loss of such a useful tool. A tool he had planned on using for his gold and connections. With a wave of his wand he sent the body to the exact place and position he wanted it in.

Narcissa Malfoy awoke the next morning and found her husband's side of the bed was still undisturbed. She knew he had been called to Voldemort's side and had been worried about him. As she made her way to the kitchen to prepare a cup of tea, she glanced into her husband's study. She breathed a sigh of relief as she saw the familiar blond hair cascading onto her husband's desk. It appeared he had returned and fallen asleep before he could come to bed.

"Lucius?" She called quietly. "Lucius, you should go to bed."

When her husband still didn't answer, she walked over and shook his shoulder. The motion caused the body of the Death Eater to shift and it fell out of the chair. Narcissa didn't understand as she watched her husband fall upon the floor until she looked down and saw open blank eyes staring back at her.

*** June 28th 1995 ***

Monday morning Harry and his bondmates had their next surprise in the Daily Prophet. Skeeter had told them that her editor wanted to tease the interview with Harry another week before actually publishing it so he could garner as many subscriptions as he could. Harry almost spilled his pumpkin juice when he unfurled the paper to see a large picture of Lucius Malfoy staring back at him.

Lucius Malfoy's Mysterious Death

By

Patricia Perriweather

Yesterday morning officials from the Department of Magical Law Enforcement were called to home of prominent businessman and

former (and evidence suggests current) Death Eater Lucius Malfoy. His wife, Narcissa Malfoy discovered her husband's body slumped over his desk upon awaking. Sources investigating the scene found no evidence of struggle or foul play, nor is the killing curse thought to have been used.

"It's possible that he died of natural causes." Another source in the DMLE suggests.

Narcissa Malfoy was insistent that she had no idea what her husband had been up to the previous evening, but I shall remind the readers that Mr. Malfoy was recently involved in assisting the Dark Lord when he returned. He was released from custody after questioning. Could Malfoy's death be associated with that return? An old victim who wanted revenge? An angry Dark Lord? This reporter shall continue to report on any further information that comes available.

Dark objects found while investigating Malfoy's death see page 8.
Crimes Lucius Malfoy was cleared of when he was found innocent by reason of Imperius. page 4.

Harry couldn't help but look over at Ginny Weasley who was reading the article with Gabrielle. When she had finished the same article for the second time, she looked over at her friends and asked. "Is it wrong for me to be happy about someone's death?"

"Non." Fleur responded first. "Zat man tried to cause your death, and we all know 'e was willing to 'elp Voldemort. 'E would 'ave killed 'Arry if Dobby 'ad not save 'im. Be 'appy for ze many people 'e will no longer torture or kill."

While Fleur was talking to Ginny, Harry looked toward the Slytherin table. He found Draco still staring at the newspaper while everyone around him was doing anything they could to not look at or talk to the young man. Harry's eyes followed his nemesis as he folded the newspaper, stood up and walked out of the Great Hall.

Harry was surprised that he didn't feel a single shred of pity for the young man who had just lost his father. Then he realized that in a past time he might have, but the moment Draco had touched Gabrielle any chance of him caring what became of the ferret had died.

Fleur had the start of her graduate exams that morning. Since a good portion of the Beauxbaton seventh years were at Hogwarts, the French Ministry had sent a small delegation of test givers to conduct them. Instead of N.E.W.T.S they were called ASPIC Exams which Fleur said stood for Accumulation de Sorcellerie Particulièrement Intensive et Contraignante or Accumulation of Particularly Intensive and Constraining Sorcery.

"Good luck." Harry said as Fleur left the table.

"Zank you." Fleur replied. "No kissing." She continued mentally with a mischievous grin.

"What about nibbling or caressing?" Harry asked back.

"Just remember someday you'll be taking your tests and you wouldn't want me to disrupt your testing zat way would you?"

"Who would you kiss to disrupt my tests?" Harry asked but was immediately bombarded with images of his older bondmate in her black knickers and matching lace bra that seemed a half size too small. That was followed by an obviously choreographed time of her slowly starting to remove them. "Ok...ok...uhm...you win." Harry stammered. "No kisses." Now I think I need a shower this morning. A very cold one."

Fleur giggled as she smiled her victory smile. "I love you 'Arry."

"I love you to my flower and in four more days there will be no more hiding it."

Those four days passed quickly. Each day Fleur left for exams and each evening she arrived back mentally exhausted. After dinner, Harry, Hermione and Gabrielle would escort her back to her room to study for the next day. It became routine for Fleur to lay her head in Harry's lap and as he ran his fingers soothingly through her hair, Hermione and Gabrielle would query their sister on the next day's topic. Gabrielle had to spend a great deal of time translating certain parts of french textbooks for Hermione. Though unintentional, Fleur benefited from the bond during the testing. On several occasions as she pondered a particular problem, her thoughts bled over to the

rest of them, and Hermione couldn't help but respond with the correct answer if she remembered it.

The examiner for Fleur's Charms exam was impressed by Fleur's Patronus. In fact everyone who was testing at the time paused to stare at the silvery Osprey as it circled the room.

***July 2nd 1995 ***

The day of the End of Year Feast arrived and the bondmates had gathered as they normally did to walk to breakfast together. On their way their path was blocked by two house-elves. One had large brown eyes while the other elf looked nervous.

"It's after the third task and Winky has not drunk a butterbeer in weeks." Said the little elf. "Winky wants to know about this family that will have lots of children."

"This is yours Gabrielle." Harry said and pushed his acknowledged girlfriend forward toward the little elf.

"Bonjour Winky." Gabrielle said in a quiet voice. "You look much better than you did."

"You said Winky had to not drink butterbeer if Winky wanted a new family. Winky did that."

"As I said zen, it's not a real family yet, but someday I think it will be."

"Who is this family? Winky wants to see them." The elf pleaded.

Gabrielle looked over at Harry and he smiled and nodded.

"We are the family." Harry said as he knelt down to look at the elf. "Someday these three women will be my wives and I guess sometime after that, there will be children."

"Three wives?" Winky asked suspiciously.

"They are bonded Winky." Dobby said.

Winky's eyes grew even larger and a look of excitement came over her. "Harry Potter and his wives want Winky to be their elf?"

"Oui." Gabrielle replied. "We want you to be our elf."

"We also want Dobby to be our elf as well." Harry added remembering Dobby's request. "But we do not have a house yet so if you do bond with us, you can either spend time at the Delacours in France or here at Hogwarts."

"What about Sirius?" Hermione asked. "They might be able to help him."

"That's a possibility also." Harry agreed. "So you two want to bond with us?"

"If you do bond, we'll have some rules you must follow." Hermione said.

"Dobby wants to be elf to the great Harry Potter sir and his wives." Dobby replied. "Dobby's greatest dream has been to be Harry Potter's elf sir."

All eyes turned toward the female elf. "Winky wants to bond. Winky promises to be a good elf, always doing what she's told."

They ended up in the Room of Requirements to perform the required bonding ritual which seemed pretty complex to Harry and Hermione. When the bonding was completed Hermione gave the rules that Fleur had suggested.

"Winky, Dobby now that you are our elves, you must follow three very important rules at all times." Hermione began. "The first one is if you ever want to be free, you must ask us."

Dobby and Winky looked nervously at each other.

"Dobby that rule is because we believe all families should be required to free any elf that doesn't want to be a part of their family like you and the Malfoys." Harry explained.

Dobby nodded his head rapidly. "Dobby will never want to not be Harry Potter's elf."

"The next rule is you must always tell us if we ask you to do something you don't want to do." Hermione said. "For example, Winky your old Master told you to go up in a very high place when you didn't want to go."

"A good house-elf does what she's told." Winky replied and then remembered she was speaking to her new mistress. "Mistress Hermione."

"Hmmm, make that four rules then..." Hermione started but Fleur cut her off.

"You don't need to make zat a rule. Zey will call you want you want as long as you allow zem some latitude to show zat you zey are your elf. Remember zat zey want to serve you." Fleur smiled at Winky. "I would like you to call me Miss Fleur and I zink Miss 'ermione and Miss Gabrielle will be good."

Winky nodded. "Miss Fleur. Do you have other house-elves?"

"My parents 'ave zree." Fleur replied. "Zey 'ave a very large 'ome in ze south of France. You can work zere if you want."

"Large home?" Winky asked. "Children?"

"Non, Miss Gabrielle and I are ze only children, but zere are large gardens to keep and a boat to clean and ze 'ouse itself is very large."

"Can you work in a muggle house?" Hermione asked.

"Only if the muggles know about magic." Dobby replied.

"Maybe you could help my parents then." Hermione suggested. "They loved Dobby when he served them when they came here."

Dobby beamed in pride at the compliment.

"You can decide what you want to do." Hermione said.

"Dobby would like to be where Mister Harry is." Dobby stated instantly.

"Thanks Dobby." Harry said. "But for the next two weeks I'm going to be at my relatives house. The one where we first met and you can't be there unless ."

"Winky will go help Miss Hermione's parents for those two weeks." Winky said. "Most muggles don't know how to clean a house properly." She looked at Hermione. "Can you tell me where they live? I can go right now." The little elf looked frustrated when Hermione suggested she wait until tomorrow when they would see the Grangers and could explain about the elf and why she would be cleaning their house.

"But now you two can pack up mine and Gabrielle's belongings in our room." Fleur said. "Mamam will retrieve once the carriage is back at Beauxbaton."

"Yes Miss Fleur." Winky replied happily.

Hermione sighed as she knew it would take time for her to undo what she thought she knew. "You can pack up mine as well." she said, "but first I need to tell you the last rule."

Both elves again looked nervous.

"You are not allowed to punish yourselves." Hermione said. "If you think you did anything that you need to punish yourself for, you come tell one of us and we'll decide."

The elves nodded their agreement to the rule and then left to start doing the work they were assigned.

** E E **

The bondmates were notified that the Hogwart's Headmaster wanted a meeting in the early afternoon.

"Thank you for coming." Dumbledore started when they arrived in his office and sat down. "The last time we talked there was frustration on both sides and I'm hoping we can put that behind us and move forward."

"Yes sir." Harry responded.

"I know I made mistakes, but I really did what I thought was best for your safety." Dumbledore said. "I think you are familiar with Mrs. Arabela Figg?"

"The cat lady who lives near my Aunt and Uncle?" Harry asked. "What about her?"

"She's a squib." Dumbledore replied. "I've known her since she was a very young girl. She lives there for the sole reason to look after you."

Harry was stunned as he remembered the woman with all of the cats who watched him on occasion. He couldn't believe that she was connected to the Magical world.

"I should have checked on you from time to time," Dumbledore admitted, "but I thought..." His words trailed off as he removed his half moon glasses and removed an imaginary speck of dirt from his tear duct before putting the glasses back on. "When you get as old as I am, time seems to get away from you. Hours pass in what seems like minutes and years can pass as quickly as a week. But that is neither here nor there. I understand Mr. Delacour will be escorting you to your relative's house tomorrow. I will leave what occurs in his and of course your hands."

"Yes sir."

"Now I wanted to give you an idea of what has happened in the last week." He looked over at Hermione. "Miss Granger, I personally warded your parent's house yesterday. The wards are strong enough to withstand most attacks and should provide at least enough time for your parents to activate portkeys if a sustained attack is initiated."

"Thank you sir."

Dumbledore pulled out a wooden case from his desk drawer and opened it up displaying two necklaces with small vials as pendants. "Since obviously your parents do not have wands, I made touch portkeys. Inside these necklaces are small pebbles. All they have to do is open the vials and touch the pebble inside to activate the portkey."

"Where will it take them?" Hermione asked.

"Here." Dumbledore replied as he closed the box and handed it to Hermione. "The house-elves have been instructed to notify myself or Professor McGonagall immediately if they appear."

"I appreciate what you have done." Hermione said.

The twinkle emerged in Dumbledore's eyes as he looked at the four teenagers. "I wasn't given much of a choice in the matter, nor should I have been."

"I read about your resignation from the International Confederation." Fleur said.

"Your father's remarks made an impact." Dumbledore replied. "If I do not get a chance to see him before tomorrow, please extend my appreciation for his help." He then opened a drawer and took out two rolls of parchment along with two wands and passed them over to Harry. "Your parents' wills and their wands. The wills have been confirmed by the proper authorities and you were left everything." He handed over another roll of parchment. "If you give this to a teller at Gringotts they will insure you are issued a key to the Potter's main vault."

Harry was staring at the two wands he had in his hand. His thumb was rubbing up and down the willow wood of his mother's. Finally he looked up into the Headmaster's blue eyes. "Thank you sir." he said in a choked voice.

"You're welcome Harry." Dumbledore replied. "Please look at your mother's will carefully. She references a non-magical solicitor who was responsible for her muggle world affairs. I have no way of determining what that may concern."

Harry nodded his understanding.

"I've also started the requirements to transfer your guardianship away from the Dursleys to Sirius per the instructions in your parents' wills. It can't be actually completed until Sirius is fully cleared and available to sign the appropriate paperwork at the Ministry, but by starting the process the Dursleys are removed as your legal guardians. That will prevent them from doing anything that would be

detrimental to you such as take you out of the country or try to seize your possessions nor can they prevent you from leaving in two weeks to go to the Delacours."

"What is 'is legal status zen?" Fleur asked.

"Ward of the court basically." Dumbledore replied. "Though in this case I volunteered to be responsible." At the look the bondmates gave him he continued. "I will not do anything you don't want done. Even if you decide to go to Beauxbaton I will not prevent it. I truly hope you don't though. I hope we can repair any damage that has happened between us and move forward in finding a way to defeat Voldemort." Dumbledore sat back in this chair before continuing. "In fact I want to offer a, well let's call it what it is, a bribe though I think overall it will help this school as well."

Harry stared wearily at the old wizard.

"What are your plans for next year Fleur?" Dumbledore asked.

"We were going to discuss it this summer, but if 'Arry and Gabrielle return to 'ogwarts, I'll probably get a place in 'ogsmeade." Fleur responded. "Why do you ask?"

"I would like to offer you a position here at Hogwarts next year." Dumbledore replied. "Though the pay would be minimal, it would provide you with your own quarters and a chance to be with Harry."

"I am not inclined to accept a charity position 'eadmaster." Fleur said. "Even if it allows me to spend time with my bondmate."

"As I said, I think it will help the school as well." Dumbledore sighed before continuing. "As I am sure you know from Harry and Hermione, the instructional quality of our Defense classes has been less than it should have in the last few years. I am concerned the students like Harry might not have the required basis for their upcoming OWLs, not to mention the possibility of fighting against Voldemort. I am suggesting you, in an unofficial instructor capacity provide those students who wish to learn an opportunity to do so." Dumbledore said. "Your classes would be purely voluntary, but you would also have full rights to bar anyone who is disruptive from future classes."

"Eet is a tempting offer 'eadmaster. We will discuss it and I will let you know."

"I would just like to add one other thing, though it is not part of the bribe." Dumbledore said. "As you will have you own quarters, Prefects are allowed out of their dorms after hours and as long as they perform their required duties, there will be no problems with them spending time in those quarters."

"Are you saying that you have already chosen next years prefects sir?" Hermione asked.

"There really isn't much of a choice in the matter Miss Granger." Dumbledore replied. "You are the best student in the school, though Gabrielle is quickly catching up with your last year's performance." He nodded toward the youngest Delacour. "As for the boy's side, Harry's grades have shot up recently which I believes comes from the company he is surrounded and linked with. He also brings the intangible of leadership to the position. Even amongst the Slytherins he is grudgingly respected."

"It is a generous offer 'eadmaster." Fleur said. "If 'Arry, 'Ermione and Gabrielle return to 'Ogwarts, one zat I zink I would like, but I will not commit to either it or of my bondmates returning until we can discuss it."

"Very well." Dumbledore replied. "Now for what else has been going on. As I'm sure you've read, Lucius Malfoy is dead. Though there is no official cause of death, I feel he died somehow at the hands of Riddle, possibly for being caught by the Ministry."

"But he wasn't charged with anything."

"But he was still questioned, and his value became less. His influence in the Ministry had evaporated." Dumbledore explained. "Understand that Voldemort does not care about anyone Harry, he only cares about what he wants. His Death Eaters are only resources to be used and discarded if necessary."

"Yes sir."

"Peter Pettigrew's trial is scheduled for the 10th." Dumbledore said next. "Can I presume you would like to attend?"

"Yes sir." Harry replied.

"I will make sure you are escorted then. Now Cornelius is asking if you would make a public appearance with him." Dumbledore said. "Or at least a statement of support for his administration."

"Why would I do that?" Harry asked.

"The Minister is on very political shaky grounds at the moment. A word of support from you would go a long way to prevent the Wizengamut from calling for his removal."

"But..."

"Arry, let's talk zis over with Papa." Fleur suggested. "I know you don't like it, but you can make or break ze Ministry right now. We need to know what is best for ze fight against Voldemort."

Harry buried his head in his hands, but nodded.

"Now before I send you on your way, I wish you the best for the summer." Dumbledore said. "I know Alain plans on some type of training for you. I suggest you also work on tapping your source of power as well."

"How?" Harry asked. "I've only done it when someone I care about is in danger."

"I'm not sure, but maybe try to use the same feelings you have for your Patronus and try casting. If I come across anything this summer that might help, I'll make sure to get it to you."

"Yes sir, thank, you sir." Harry replied.

"Very well then. Have a good summer. I think though, I shall see you before it is over."

*** E E ***

Harry and Hermione were walking together a short time later in an empty corridor back toward Gryffindor tower. Fleur and Gabrielle had left them to go say goodbye to Madam Maxine and to make

arrangements for the Delacours to pick up their belongings at Beauxbaton.

"Are we coming back here next year?" Hermione asked.

"What do you want?" Harry asked.

"You to be safe." She replied instantly. "But since that never seems to be an option for you, what I want more than anything is for you to be happy."

"I am." Harry replied. "Even with Voldemort, prophecies, and everything else, I am happy as long as I'm with you, Gabrielle and Fleur."

"It was a nice offer to Fleur." Hermione said.

"It was." Harry said. "and of course you being a prefect."

Hermione blushed. "You too, you'll probably be Quidditch captain as well."

"Nope, don't want it." Harry looked around and seeing no one, he pulled Hermione into a broom closet. "I only want you at this moment." His lips found hers and they spent several minutes enjoying each others kiss. It was until they heard a bump on the door that they separated. They first thought of waiting until whoever it was was gone, but they recognized a familiar hum and knew it was Luna Lovegood. As they opened the door to go out they found the blonde young witch hanging a sign on the door.

"Hello Harry, Hello Hermione is Gabrielle in there also?" Luna asked as she poked her head into the closet looking for her friend. When she was doing that Harry looked over and read the sign she was hanging. It listed a bunch of items and books with a plea for their return.

"What is this Luna?" Harry asked.

"Oh, people like to hide my possessions. They do it all the time." Luna replied. "Now though I need to pack so I need them returned."

"Why do people hide your things?" Hermione asked.

"Oh...well..." Luna shrugged. "Some people think I'm a bit odd you see. They call me 'Loony' Lovegood sometimes."

Harry remembered Gabrielle mentioning that and it made him angry. Luna had been a great friend to Gabrielle and Ginny. "No one has the right to take your things Luna." He said.

"It's alright Harry." Luna said. "It always comes back eventually."

"No it is not alright." Harry replied. "Can I help you find...wait I have a better idea. Dobby, Winky"

Two elves popped in beside them. "What can Dobby and Winky do for Mr. Harry and Miss Hermione?"

"Do you two know Miss Lovegood?" Harry asked.

"Dobby knows Misses is a Ravenclaw student."

"Excellent." Harry said. He took a sign from the ones Luna was holding and handed it to Winky. "I want the two of you to find all of this stuff and put it on Luna's bed. I also want to know if someone had it with their things."

"Yes Harry Potter we can do that sir." and the two elves were gone with the list.

"There." Harry said. "Now you can go enjoy yourself."

"You didn't need to do that." Luna said. "I don't want to bother anyone."

"They like the work it seems." Harry said. "And helping a friend is not a bother. If you need anything else you let me know."

"Thank you." Luna replied as she looked at Harry's hair. "I still have my Lunar charts out in case Gabrielle needs them." She said. "I really like your hair."

Harry's hand immediately went to his head and he ran his fingers through his hair as he tried to connect his hair with Lunar charts. "Uh..thanks." He replied.

"You're welcome. Well have a great evening." Luna said and turned to leave.

"Luna." Hermione called to the witch. "Would you like to sit with us for the feast tonight?"

"Me?" Luna asked. "You want me to sit with you?"

"Of course Luna." Harry replied. "I want the whole school to know that you are my friend."

Both Harry and Hermione thought the smile the younger witch had as she walked away was one of the best things that they had ever seen.

Later that evening, Luna was sitting between Harry and Gabrielle waiting for the end of the year Feast to begin. The Headmaster climbed to his feet for his announcements.

"Another year has gone. It has been a year filled with excitement of the Triwizard Tournament and of uncertainty caused by the return of Lord Voldemort." The Headmaster paused to wait for the whispering from the name to die down. Finally he continued. "The purpose of the Triwizard tournament was to bring together three schools and their students in a friendly competition. In other words to unite us with our fellow wizard and witches of the world. Lord Voldemort wishes to do exactly the opposite. He will try to divide us. He will try to sow uncertainty and fear. He will try to turn people against their friends, and he will try to make you think there is no one you can trust." Dumbledore again paused before he continued. "I believe that we will be facing dark and difficult times. I also believe the only way we can be victorious in fighting that darkness is to stand together. To unite with our friends, to unite with out fellow witches and wizards and fight the darkness together. We must put aside our differences. We must concentrate on our sameness, we must stand together or we shall fall separately."

A good portion of the Gryffindor table led the applause, but it was followed quickly by the Hufflepuffs and the Ravenclaws. Only a few students from Slytherin joined in.

Dumbledore waved everyone back down to their seats before he continued. "Now for a more pleasant duty, I get to announce the winner of the House Cup." He looked over at the giant hourglasses before he continued. "In fourth place with two hundred and ninety-three points is Slytherin."

"From first place to fourth." Hermione said. "because of what Draco did."

"In third place, with three hundred and sixty-eight points is Ravenclaw. Hufflepuff barely missed out as they finish with four hundred and fifteen points while Gryffindor wins the House Cup with four hundred and thirty three points."

The cheers erupted again from the Gryffindor table. When the noise settled down, Dumbledore said. "Have a safe summer and tuck in." With those words the food magically appeared in front of them.

After dinner they retired to the Gryffindor common room until bedtime and then snuck out to the Room of Requirement for a good night's sleep.

A/N: Next chapter, Welcome home to Privet Dr. The Dursleys meet Alain Delacour.

Chapter 34

Walden Macnair moved silently through the Ministry. He had his orders from his master and though he had tried several times, he had yet to be able to get close to Pettigrew. The death of Lucius though terrified the Ministry executioner and he knew he could not afford to fail the Dark Lord. Tonight was the night he must make it happen. With the next day being the day the Hogwarts Express returned with the students, many witches and wizards took the day off to welcome home their children. Tonight the Ministry was staffed at it's most minimum functioning level.

"Just wished the holding cells were easier to get to." Macnair thought. They were on level two on the other side of the Auror office. He paused at the door and listened for any noise. Hearing none, he quietly turned the handle and slipped into the desk filled room. He looked around the darkened office and breathed a sigh of relief when he found only a single lamp lit at as an Auror sat at his desk. Macnair stopped and waited, barely breathing. He was disillusioned but knew that there were several spells that would detect him none the less. Finally he let out a small sigh of relief as the Auror never looked up but continued on the pile of paperwork that littered his desk.

Walden was a master at silencing his footsteps, a talent required when approaching some animals that had to be executed. Each step was slow, excruciatingly slow as he made sure nothing was in his path that would make a noise. Another soft sigh passed his lips as he made it to the door to the holding cells. Keeping an eye on the Auror at the desk, Macnair silently turned the handle and quietly slipped inside once the door had opened.

The Death Eater scanned the room, looking for anything out of place. It was still dim, but there was more light in the cell area so he could easily see there were no further guards. He started down the row of cells, still walking slowly and silently. He glanced into each one as he passed. Finally he stopped when he came to a cell that had a sturdy mess screen overlaying the metal bars.

"This is it." He thought. Obviously the Ministry knew Wormtail was an animagus and this was the cell meant to keep him in even in that form. He glanced through the mesh and he could see the rat laying in the middle of the bed, obviously asleep. "Warmer sleeping in your

fur?" Walden whispered to the rat. "I imagine it is. Well you won't have to worry about being cold every again." Macnair lifted his wand and slid it through the mesh screen. "Our master wanted me to give you one last gift."Avada Kedravra". A sickly green light jumped from his wand and hit the rat.

"Done, now I can get out of here." Macnair thought. "My master will be pleased." He turned and started walking quietly back toward the door that led out. He never saw the wand come out from under the invisibility cloak in an open cell beside Pettigrew's."

"Stupefy" The voice of Alastor Moody said and the red beam hit the Ministry executioner in the back. As Walden Macnair slumped to the ground, the door between the office and the holding cell area opened. The man who had been working at his desk entered.

"Is he?" Gawain Robards started as he looked at the floor.

"Yeah, he's disillusioned, here." Moody said. He pointed his wand at the man on the floor and said "Finite." The disillusionment spell ended, leaving the Death Eater visible.

"Damn, is that Macnair?" Robards said when he could see the man sprawled on the floor. "You were right. Glad Director Bones listened to you instead of Rufus. He swore you were just being paranoid again."

"I am paranoid, but it doesn't mean I'm not right as well." Moody gruffed as he grabbed Macnair's left arm and pulled up the sleeve. The red skull and snake was clearly visible. "I hate Death Eaters."

"How's Pettigrew?"

Moody opened the cell two doors down from the one with the now dead rat in it. With a flick of his wand and a 'Finite' command, the disillusioned and bound Pettigrew reappeared. "He's fine for now and I intend to keep him that way until he has his date with a Dementor. The killing curse is way to kind for traitors like him."

"Do you think that's what the court will give him?"

"Harry Potter will be in that courtroom Gawain. Mark my word that Fudge himself will request it."

"Let's clean up this mess." He nodded toward Macnair. "And then get some sleep. I think it will be interesting to see what Walden has to say tomorrow. See if he can lead us to any more scum working in this building." The senior and the retired Auror quickly searched Macnair and after taking his wand, they put him in one of the cells. Pettigrew was moved back to the mesh lined cell and the dead rat was discarded.

** E E **

For the first time since he had arrived at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry Potter did not dread the final day of the school year. Though he would be returning to his Aunt and Uncle's house he knew this time it would be completely different. The main reason of course was that he would be accompanied by his bondmates. Three very beautiful and intelligent women, one of whom was a legal aged witch, would be living with him. Harry was actually looking forward to seeing the faces of his relatives when he arrived. He could already envision the look on his cousin's piggish face as Dudley slowly realized that Harry had not one, but three women in love with him and were already all but married to him.

Harry Potter smiled as he helped each of his bondmates climb into the carriage along with Ginny and Luna. He climbed in after them and sat between Fleur and Gabrielle. As the horseless carriages started moving Hermione was the first to speak as she looked toward the front.

"I wonder what magic they use to make these move?"

"There's no magic." Luna said as her eyes looked toward the front of the carriage as well. "Thestrals."

Hermione looked at the young blonde witch and wondered if the girl knew something she didn't, or if this was another imaginary creature she liked to talk about. Hermione was surprised when Fleur spoke first.

"You can see zem?"

"Oh yes." Luna replied.

"I'm sorry. Would eet be impolite to ask who?" Fleur asked further confusing her bondsister.

"My mother. She died when I was nine."

"Thestrals are winged 'orses zat can only be seen by someone who 'as seen someone die." Fleur explained quietly to the rest of the carriage.

"You mean there are animals pulling these carriages?" Hermione asked and quickly looked toward the front of the carriage again. It was only a mental nudge from Fleur that brought her to remember Luna. "Oh I'm sorry Luna." She cried as grabbed one of Luna's hands. "I sometimes let my curiosity override my...well I shouldn't have. I'm sorry."

"It's alright. Wrackspruts can do that to you sometimes." Luna replied. "If you wear certain vegetables it can help. Radishes are exceptionally good." she lifted her other hand to point to her radish earring.

"I'm sorry I didn't know about your mother." Harry said.

"Not many do." Luna replied and it hit Harry hard as he realized that she was really admitting that she hadn't had too many friends that she could confide in. Luna shrugged. "As I said, I was nine and my mother was experimenting with a spell. It went rather badly."

"I'm sorry." Harry said again.

"It was a long time ago, though I still feel bad sometimes, at least I do still have my dad." Luna replied. "It's alright though, I know I'll see her again someday."

Harry remembered his own time with his mother and father and smiled at her. "Yes, I'm sure you will." He said. "And I'm sure she's watching you everyday."

Silence fell over the carriage for a few seconds before Harry asked if Luna had got her property returned. Though he knew she had since Dobby and Winky had turned up shortly before they had gone to bed

the previous night to tell them they were done and to report who had her possessions. Harry had the list of culprits in his pocket, but had decided to not do anything yet. He had been relieved to find Cho's name was not on the list though her friend Marietta Edgecombe's had been. Harry hoped he might be able to convince Cho to help in Ravenclaw House the next year.

"Oh yes. The elves did a wonderful job. They even cleaned and folded my clothes." Luna replied. "Thank you."

When they arrived at the Train Station, Harry led the way onto the train and toward the back he found the person he had hoped to find earlier sitting alone in a compartment staring out a window at the bustle of students on the platform. Harry open the door and poked his head in. "Neville, do you mind if we sit with you?"

Neville looked stunned. "You...you want to sit with me?" He asked wide-eyed.

"Of course." Harry replied.

"Sure." Neville said with a nervous smile on his face. He sat up straight as Harry along with five beautiful young women came into the compartment and made themselves comfortable.

Harry settled between Gabrielle and Hermione with Fleur sitting beside Hermione. Luna sat down beside Neville while Ginny was on her other side. A bit of red outside the compartment window caught Harry's eyes and he watched Ron wander past. He saw his old friend look in and hesitate, but finally he continued on. Harry sighed as he looked around at the people with him but then Fleur's eyes caught his and he couldn't help but smile. Harry really couldn't say he missed his old friend, he was more like an old pair of shoes that didn't fit anymore but he didn't have the heart to discard.

Soon the train departed the station and started its long journey south out of Scotland. It wasn't long before summer plans became a topic of conversation.

"I usually don't do much in the summer." Neville said. "I work in our gardens, I have a few special plants I'm growing."

"I like to work in my gardens too." Luna said. "I have two flutterby bushes and a whole garden of flowers."

"You...you like plants?" Neville asked with interest.

"Yes, but sometimes they don't get the attention they need, because daddy and I go on long trips looking for certain exotic creatures." Luna explained.

"If you want, I'd be glad to take care of them when you're gone." Neville offered. "I...I'm pretty good with plants."

"You would?" Luna exclaimed. "That would be nice. I know daddy is wanting to go to Germany to look for duck-horned placows this summer."

"Umm..yeah anytime you want me too." Neville said. "You can floo me and maybe we can get together earlier so you can show them to me?" Neville's question had an air of hopeful nervousness about it.

"Luna." Hermione started. "Are you sure your father wasn't thinking of the Duck-billed platypus? They live in Australia."

"No, I'm positive he said duck-horned placows."

"But ducks don't have horns." Hermione said almost wanting to cry.

"It all depends on what ducks you are talking about now doesn't it?" Luna replied. "But I've never heard of a duck-billed pla.. what was it again?"

Hermione spent several minutes describing the exotic Australian mammal that had the body of an otter, but the bill of a duck, the tail of an beaver, laid eggs and the males were poisonous. Harry, Fleur, Ginny and Gabrielle were extremely amused when Luna was hesitant to believe that such a creature existed. It was only when Hermione promised to bring pictures of it, that Luna accepted that Hermione wasn't trying to make fun of her.

"Speaking of you being in Europe in ze summer Luna." Gabrielle said. "We were wondering if your father would like a big story for his magazine?"

"Bigger than a duck-horned placow?" Luna asked.

"Oui." Gabrielle replied. "Ze reporter Rita Skeeter is going to be writing article on..." she stopped as she realized that though Luna would need to know the entire topic, Neville was in the compartment as well.

"It's only three weeks." Harry said to his bondmates. "And my mother wanted me to give Neville a chance at friendship. I say we tell them."

Fleur and Hermione shrugged. The only reason for the delay now was for the Twins. If it happened sooner, it would not be a big deal.

"Neville, Luna." Harry started. "We've been keeping a very large secret and we are going to share it with you now. It's what we are wanting to know if your father wants to publish Luna." Harry put his arm around Gabrielle's shoulder. "I think you both know that Gabrielle is my girlfriend."

"Is it your bonding?" Luna asked excitedly. "Where did you do it? Do you still have the chains?" She looked at Gabrielle. "Is he as handsome naked as I think he would be?"

"Oui...uh non, zere are no chains." Gabrielle exclaimed. "Oui, we are bonded, but ze Veela love bonding is not done with dancing and chains."

"Luna, the bonding happens as a physical projection in the mind." Hermione added. "Though it seems very real, it's all imaginary as the connection is made."

"And you know how?" Luna asked. "My father did a lot of research in writing that article."

"Luna, 'Ermione knows because she was zere." Fleur said. "As was I. We also bonded with 'Arry."

"Yeah...uh that's the secret guys." Harry said. "That I am actually love bonded to all three of these ladies."

"But..but" Neville tried to interject but words failed him. Harry could see that he was looking at Hermione and guessed what the problem was.

"No, Hermione is not Veela, but she did bond. She was projected into the bondscape by Veela magic, and Fleur and Gabrielle asked her to join us when they realized she and I were in love." Harry said and then looked over at Hermione and winked. "Want to show them your Veela magic?"

As Neville and Luna watched, Hermione closed her eyes and concentrated. Her hair lost its bushiness and soon gentle curls flowed down her head.

"That's nice." Luna said staring at Hermione's hair. She reached over and ran her fingers through it. "Very nice."

"So would your father want that story?" Harry asked.

"I imagine he would, but I'll ask him." Luna replied still gazing at Hermione's hair.

"We are going to pretend the bond only happened at that time, probably in about three weeks or so."

"Why?" Neville asked.

"Let's just say that if you had a bet in the pool the twins are running of when Hermione and I would get together you might want to take it back, or change it." Harry replied with a grin.

Gabrielle leaned over to Luna and whispered. "And yes he is very very handsome naked."

Fleur later started a simple game of levitating a gobstone through conjured floating rings. If you missed a ring, the gobstone would squirt its foul liquid on you as a penalty. The rings became more numerous or in more difficult positions to navigate as it went along. Neville was doing the worst by far after only a short time. He had been squirted at least a dozen times. Finally Fleur noticed something.

"Neville, ze wand you use, it looks old." She said.

Neville looked at his wand and finally said. "It was my father's."

Fleur knew from Harry about Neville's parents, but it gave her an opportunity to see if Neville wanted to talk about it. "I'm sorry." Fleur said. "When did 'e die?"

Neville didn't say anything for a couple of minutes and the whole compartment was silent, finally he looked around at everyone and said. "No, my parents aren't dead. They...they..." Tears came to Neville's eyes but he blinked them back and continued. "they were tortured by several Death Eaters."

"Barty Crouch Jr." Harry whispered as the trial he and Gabrielle had seen in the pensieve came to mind.

Neville nodded. "Along with Bellatrix Lestrange, her husband and his brother." He said quietly. "They are in St. Mungos." He looked down for a few seconds before looking back up and continuing. "We go see them every holiday."

"I'm so sorry." Fleur said.

Neville shook his head, but then he looked down and found a small hand had taken his. He looked up to find himself looking into Luna Lovegood's eyes. "Some Gryffindor I am." He remarked to her as he tried to use the sleeve of his robes to wipe away the tears.

"Courage isn't having no fear." Luna remarked. "It's living with and facing those fears. A man who cannot shed a tear, isn't a man I want to know."

Neville smiled through the wetness in his eyes as he opened his hand to release hers, only to have her hold his hand more tightly.

"If you ever want someone to go with you, all you have to do is ask." Luna said. "I will be glad to go with you."

Neville nodded.

"I was only making ze comment about your wand because you obviously 'ave ze magic, but eet seems erratic, uncontrolled." Fleur

said. "Did you ever 'ave it checked by a wandmaker to make sure it's compatible to you?"

"What do you mean?" Neville asked. "Wouldn't my father's wand work best for me?"

"Not necessarily, wands which are crafted for a specific magical person work best." Fleur explained. "In fact some wands will actually fight against a person's magic." She held up her wand. "Ze core is a 'air from my Grandmother, but ze wand itself was made specifically for me around zat 'air."

"Mr. Ollivander said something similar to me." Harry said. "He said it's the wand that chooses the wizard. I must have tried a hundred wands before he found the right one for me."

Neville looked at his wand carefully.

"Here try mine." Luna said and handed Neville her wand.

Neville felt a warmth when he touched Luna's wand like he'd never felt with his own wand. He just sat and felt the wood between his fingers for a few seconds before he levitated a gobstone and started putting it through the hoops. Though he still wasn't very quick, he felt like the magic was smoother, easier to control. When his gobstone made it through the last hoop without spitting at him, he smiled at Luna and handed her wand back to her. "Thanks."

"You're welcome Neville." She replied as she put her wand back behind her ear.

"We have to be getting close to London," Hermione said. "We better get packed back up and changed into our muggle clothes."

Not long after that, the train started slowing down as it pulled into King's Cross Station. As they started to pull out their trunks, Fleur reached into hers and took out a book.

"Ginny, 'ere is a book zat will give you a better understanding of Veela." She said as she handed it to the red haired girl. "I 'ope you and your brothers can use it for your mother."

Ginny took the book and tucked it into her own trunk. "Thanks. We'll do what we can."

"Harry, Harry." the voice of Molly Weasley cut through all other sounds on the platform as Harry stepped down off the train. He barely had time to roll his eyes before she had enveloped him in a hug.

"Oh Harry dear." Molly exclaimed. "How are you? You should have owed. I'm sure Dumbledore would have let you come home early. Now I'm making plans for your birthday party at the Burr..."

"Mrs. Weasley." Harry said as he tried to escape her hug. "Mrs. Weasley. PLEASE let me go." He finally said as he pushed his way out of her arms. Molly Weasley took a step back in shock.

Gabrielle was by her bondmate's side in an instance glaring at the Weasley Matriarch.

"Mrs. Weasley, I still have not heard a single apology from you for the Howler you sent." Harry said sharply.

Molly Weasley was about to reply when another voice appeared. "Excusez-moi, ees zere a problem 'ere?" Alain Delacour asked.

"This is none of your concern whoever you are." Molly said indignantly. She turned back to Harry and said. "Harry, for your own good, I can't let this harlot..."

"My mistake." Mr. Delacour interrupted with a glint of ire in his voice. "Let me introduce myself. I am Monsieur Alain Delacour. Ze father of zese two 'arlots as you say, one of which I do believe you also mentioned in a 'owler?" Mrs. Weasley's face turned red but the red quickly changed to a sickly green when Alain continued in a voice that was not loud but demanded respect. "I am also ze Deputy Minister of Magic of France. I ask you again madam, ees zere a problem 'ere?"

Molly Weasley is a woman who is rarely left speechless, but at that moment she was desperately trying to find a way to remove both of her feet from her mouth as she stared hopelessly at the man in front of her. She knew a single word from him and her husband would be

out of a job instantly. All she could do was shake her head slightly from side to side as her mouth hung open.

"Zen if you will excuse Mr. Potter and my daughters, we must be on our way."

As they walked away Harry could here Ginny berating her mother. "You are the most clueless person moth.." He smiled as he took Gabrielle's hand and squeezed it.

"I love you my angel." He said. "I know she means well, but you are my family."

Gabrielle smiled back at her bondmate and nodded.

As they were about get to the Barrier separating platform nine and three quarters and the muggle world, a familiar face appeared through it.

"Harry." Arthur Weasley said. "Did Molly find you? She left Bill and me parking the ministry car and rushed in here." As he finished speaking Bill came through the barrier. Harry couldn't help but notice his eyes fell upon Fleur again.

"Yes sir, but I think you will find her a little off at the moment." Harry replied.

"Did she apologize?" Arthur asked as he looked at the blonde young lady beside Harry.

"Unfortunately no. In fact she was on her way to insulting Gabrielle again."

Arthur sighed and turned his attention to Gabrielle. "Miss Delacour right?" and when she nodded, Arthur continued. "Miss Delacour, I wish to apologize for anything that my wife or my family did to insult you. If you need anything specific to redress this issue, you name it and I'll make sure it is done."

"Zank you sir. My issue is not with ze Weasley family." Gabrielle replied. "Your daughter, Fred and George 'ave been very good friends. Your wife zough.."

Arthur nodded. He then turned back to Harry. "Bill told me what happened but ever since you-know-who has returned, I haven't had much of a chance to speak to Molly. I told her on the way here she needed to apologize but..."

"Thank you sir." Harry replied. "I think Gabrielle and I need her to apologize as well, but I'll leave that up to Gabrielle." Harry then remembered what else he wanted to speak to Mr. Weasley about. He looked over at Alain and said. "I would like to talk to Mr. Weasley for a couple of minutes. I won't be long."

"Of course 'Arry." Alain said.

"Sir," Harry started to Arthur and motioned for them to get out of the way of the barrier. The two of them started walking. He noticed that Bill had stayed behind. "No flirting with Bill." Harry said to Fleur.

Fleur mentally chuckled at Harry. "E's ze one staring my love."

Harry turned his attention back to Arthur who was waiting for Harry to continue. "You know about the Basilisk I killed two years ago."

"Of course Harry. I was there when you brought Ginny into McGonagall's office. My family still owes you more than you can ever know for saving her life."

Harry smiled to himself as he just realized that Arthur had given him a way to give them the money. "I would like something from the Weasley family then."

Mr. Weasley stopped and looked at the ebony haired young man cautiously. "Is this about Molly? She's headstrong, but she means well."

"No sir, I think that is something that she needs to work out."

Arthur nodded. "You know I'd do anything for you Harry."

"Dumbledore gave me the rights to the Basilisk this year and we sold it."

Arthur couldn't help but feel a small amount of envy for Harry. He knew the basilisk would command a great deal of money. He smiled

at the young man though and asked "So what does that have to do with my family?"

"I am stopping at Gringotts when I leave here and while I am there, I plan on depositing ten thousand galleons in your vault." Harry held up his hand to stop Arthur from replying. "I plan on doing that for the next ten years. The favor I ask of your family is to accept it. When I desperately needed a family, you gave me one sir. Now I have the means to repay that kindness I plan to do it. I want Ginny and Ron to share in that money. Ron risked his life to join me and it was only bad fortune that prevented him from being there and we both know Ginny suffered a great deal that year. I thought they should get one thousand each, each year and the family itself get the other eight thousand."

"Harry, we can't take your money." Arthur said.

"Sir, you said your family owed me and this is how I choose for you to repay me." Harry countered.

Mr. Weasley stared at the young man for several seconds before nodding. "If that's what you want."

"I'm also planning on giving Ginny a new broom for her birthday, but I'd appreciate you not telling her that." Harry said. "I just don't want you to let her buy herself one before then."

Arthur grinned. "I think we can keep her humble for a bit longer."

"Thank you sir. I hope I see you sometime this summer." Harry said.

"So no birthday at the Burrow?"

"I'll be in France this year for my birthday." Harry replied.

"Of course. I hope you can make Ginny's birthday then."

"I don't want to miss her opening her broom." Harry admitted. "But I will only be there if Gabrielle and Fleur are welcome as well."

Arthur nodded. "I will have a very long talk with Molly. They will be welcome."

The two of them returned to the rest of the group and Harry could see Bill still taking occasional glances at his bondmate. "So Bill, haven't gone back to Egypt yet?"

"I'm transferring back here." Bill replied. "I will be working in the main office of Gringotts."

"Why?"

"You-Know-Who. I plan on joining the fight against him."

"Be safe then." Harry said and held out his hand to the eldest Weasley brother.

"Mr. Potter." A female voice called. Harry turned and found himself looking at Amelia Bones standing beside a young girl who looked familiar but Harry couldn't think of her name. "It's nice to see you and your...friends again." She said.

"Thank you ma'am." Harry replied.

"Minister." Amelia said to Alain.

"Director, 'ow are you today?" He said returning the greeting.

"Very well. Just collecting my niece." She turned back to Harry. "Do you know Susan? She's in Hufflepuff in your year."

"Hello Susan." Harry said and held out his hand. Susan reached gingerly for it and blushed as she shook it. He then introduced the rest of the people around him.

"I thought you'd want to know there was an attempt on Pettigrew's life last night." Amelia Bones said. "We were able to prevent it and capture another Death Eater. A ministry employee actually."

Arthur Weasley's interest rose. "Can I ask who Director?"

"Walden Macnair. He works for the.."

"Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures." Hermione finished. "He was the Executioner."

Madam Bone's monocled eye gave a quizzical look at Hermione.

"We helped Hagrid with the trial against the Hippogriff Buckbeak. Macnair was the executioner for the sham."

"If I remember correctly, the Hippogriff in question escaped. You wouldn't know anything about that would you Miss Granger?"

Alain noticed the look of discomfort on Hermione and his daughters' faces and read the situation correctly. "Director, I'm sure with what is 'appening, we don't need to waste time on such trivialities as zis? We are running late as it is."

Amelia smiled at Mr. Delacour. "My apologies Minister. I'm sorry to delay you. I shall see you on the tenth Mr. Potter?"

"Yes ma'am and please call me Harry."

As Amelia and Susan started to walk through the barrier, Susan turned back and said. "Bye Harry, have a good summer." Then blushing she turned and followed her Aunt.

Harry looked around at his bondmates and they were all looking at him and smirking.

"What?"

"E really is clueless when it comes to women isn't 'e?" Fleur asked Hermione.

"It's not really his fault though." She replied.

"What?" Harry exclaimed again.

"Ginny isn't the only girl whose had a crush on Harry Potter." Hermione replied.

"Susan?"

"Was one of them, but not nearly as much as some of the others. Romilda Vane is quite obsessed with you."

"But..but I don't even know them." Harry replied.

"And they don't know you either." Hermione replied taking his arm. "Besides, they are out of luck. You are ours."

Harry smiled at his bondmates as Fleur took his other arm. "I wouldn't want it any other way."

Mr. Delacour led the procession through the barrier where Richard and Jean Granger were waiting. Hermione ran to her parents and gave them each a hug.

"Hi princess." Her father said. "What did you do to your hair?"

"Magic." Hermione replied with a grin.

Richard Granger rolled his eyes good humorously at his daughter. He then looked over at Harry who was looking hesitantly back at him. Richard Granger took the three steps to the young man and shook his hand. "You know Hermione told us what you are doing for us." He said seriously. "Your Headmaster was at the house two days ago."

Harry shrugged. "You are probably in danger because of me sir, now that Voldemort is back. I will do what I can to prevent anything from happening to you." Mr. Granger knew without a doubt that the young man meant every word.

Nothing more needed to be said between the two men. Richard had already conceded in his heart that the young man in front of him was actually good enough for his princess. Even in their bizarre four way relationship, his daughter was happier than he had ever seen her and that was truly all a man could ever ask for his daughter. Though it didn't hurt that Hermione had mentioned they now shared a fifteen million pound nest egg from the sale of the creature Harry had killed.

Jean Granger was next to hug her daughter's boyfriend. "Thank you Harry." she said and kissed him on the cheek causing him to blush.

"Mum, Dad here are the things you need to wear." Hermione said as she handed the necklaces to her parents. "If you think you're in danger, just open them and pour the pebble into your hand."

"You know it might be a good idea to get a set of pictures of the known and suspected Death Eaters." Harry said. "That way they might spot someone who is following them."

"Zat is an excellent idea 'Arry." Alain said. "I'm sure your Auror department will 'ave something like it. I will have someone on my staff make sure it is requested."

"I need to go with Harry and my sisters now." Hermione said to her parents.

"Of course." Jean replied. "We just wanted to see you. Do you want us to take Crookshanks?"

"That might be best." Hermione agreed and passed the cage with the half-kneazle to her mother. She then knelt down and looked into the cage. "You be good Crookshanks. I'll see you in a few days."

Crookshanks just looked lazily at his mistress and went back to cleaning his fur.

"Hermione?"

"Yes Mum?"

"Harry is more than welcome to come."

Hermione smiled at her parents. They were still planning on their sleepover and Dr. Who marathon and this was the last part that was unsure.

"If the poor boy doesn't want to stay with all of you, I'll be glad to take him out on the links that day." Richard said. "Have you ever played golf Harry?"

"No sir, but I'm more than willing to learn sir."

"A driving range then. My club has a great one and they can fit a set of clubs for you."

"Sounds like fun sir. I look forward to it." Harry replied. He thought it would do well to get to know Mr. Granger better anyway.

"I zink we need to get a move on." Mr. Delacour said as he pulled a pocket watch from his muggle suit. "You wanted to go to Gringotts I do believe."

"Yes sir, but how are we getting there?" Harry asked.

"Eet seems your uncle is impressed by status oui?"

"Yes." Harry answered wondering what Alain had planned.

"Then we shall impress him my son." Alain replied as his hand pointed to a very large stretch limousine double parked outside the station. "I took ze liberty of borrowing it from our embassy."

"But the neighbors."

"Are going to know ze truth, or as close as we can get anyway." Alain said with a smile.

Harry and his bondmates along with Alain climbed into the back of the Limousine. Harry got to have the seat near all the buttons that controlled the lighting and music. Alain Delacour enjoyed watching the young man with so much on his shoulders acting like what an almost fifteen year should as he kept pushing the buttons and changing the settings. Hermione took over the radio and it wasn't long before the four teenagers had found a music station they all agreed on. The ride to the Leaky Cauldron was a short one, but Alain kept looking out to make sure no one followed them. He knew in the front seat of the Limo was the best Hit Wizard in all of France just in case.

** E E **

At Gringotts, Harry presented the note to the teller who had them wait for several minutes while new keys were made for Vault 177. Again Harry had requested that four keys be made and one given to each of them. While they waited Harry made arrangements to have the ten thousand galleons moved to the Weasley vault. Twenty minutes later a goblin cart stopped in front of the Potters' vault and it took a minute of coaxing to get Hermione to believe the cart had actually stopped and she was still alive. Fleur and Gabrielle both enjoyed the thrill of the ride.

Harry stopped short of the Vault door and stared at it as a nervous feeling invaded his stomach. He knew behind that door was something that was important to his parents. Something that would finally link him to them. With an inward breath to steady himself, he nodded to the Goblin who turned the key and opened the vault. Green smoke poured out and when it cleared he found himself looking into a fairly large vault.

The first thing that came to Harry's mind was that his mother was just like Hermione, or the other way around. Outside of the mounds of coins that covered a whole corner of the Vault, everything else in the vault was neatly organized and labeled. What appeared to be standard clear muggle storage containers lined the various walls. The ones closest to the door had labels that proclaimed such things as Evan's family photos and Lily's Wedding Dress while further back most of the containers had the name Potter on them. It seemed like someone had organized centuries of stuff in a neat fashion.

"Ees zere an accounting for 'ow much money is 'ere?" Alain asked the Goblin.

"That question can only be answered if the primary vault owner or owners asks it." the goblin stated.

"Of course." Mr. Delacour replied. He looked at Harry who repeated the question.

The goblin reached into his pocket and pulled out a roll of parchment. He ran his long finger down the page and finally said. "There are one hundred forty-eight thousand Galleons, four hundred sickles in this vault. Per the original orders for this vault and investments, twenty percent of the wealth would remain in coin form in the vault.

Harry looked at Alain and asked. "What does that mean?"

"It means this is only a small part of the overall amount your parents left you. If my calculations are correct you have about seven hundred and fifty thousand galleons in all and of course that doesn't include the other vault."

The goblin was once again referring to the parchment. "Originally it was only eighty thousand galleons when this vault went inactive, but

once the Wizard Dark Lord was banished fourteen years ago, businesses flourished and investment returns were unmatched."

"So it's likely business will start to do badly again with Voldemort back?"

If you wish financial advise, we can provide it for a fee." the goblin replied testily.

"Harry I think you might want to take the money out of the investments they are in."

Harry looked at Alain who shrugged. "My own adviser suggested moving my investments to muggle based investments for ze time being."

Harry was about to answer when he noticed a table between two stacks of containers. Hanging on the wall above the table were photographs and other parchments. "Do what you think is best Hermione." He said distractedly as he walked over to the table and looked around.

Spread out over the table was what appeared to be drawings of a home and the surrounding lands and gardens. There was even a small lake on the property. There were little notes in ink all over the page. The lake had been given a name 'Lake Lily.' The house had been first labeled Marauder's Mansion by what seemed to be James' scrawl, but that was crossed out and Potter's Place was written in below it in Lily's neat handwriting. Then as he looked at the house design, he saw something else written. One of the five bedrooms in the house had been label 'Harry's room.'

"Was this their home?" Harry murmured.

Hermione and his other bondmates were now beside him looking at it. Hermione glanced up at the photographs hanging over the table and realized some of them were aerial shots of the land outlined in the plans below, but there was no house and no Godric's Hollow.

"I don't think so." Hermione said and she pointed to the photographs. "I think this is the land..see the lake? But there's no house in the photo, nor is there any town around it and they lived in Godric's Hollow."

"This is it, isn't it?" Harry asked. "What they were giving me, but what is it?"

Fleur had noticed something else laying on the table. "It was zeir dream I zink." She pulled out the parchment that showed a deed to a large plot of land. "I don't zink you would 'ave been an only child."

"Why is this here?" Harry asked. "They couldn't have done all of this here could they?"

"Maybe, remember they were moving around a lot before they went under the Fidelius." Hermione reminded him. "They might have wanted a place to keep it spread out."

"Twenty minutes of Vault time is all that I can stay." The Goblin announced. "If we stay any longer I must charge you for my time."

"Come 'Arry." Alain said gently. "Let's get you some gold and get your summer started. If you'd like, we can take zis with you, or take it to my 'ouse so you can have it zis summer."

"Could you sir? Take it on to your house?" Harry asked. "I'd like to explore it some more later."

Alain nodded. He pulled out his wand and shrunk the plans and pictures down. He folded them carefully together and put them in his pocket. "I will have zem waiting for you when you get zere. Now get your gold and we can get out of 'ere."

Harry glared at Hermione when she only took a handful of Galleons.

"Fine." She said finally and shoveled more gold coins into her bag until it was completely full.

"Wonder how much we took?" She asked as she looked at the pile of coins that didn't appeared to have changed.

The Goblin looked down at the parchment he had and said. "The vault now has twelve hundred and eighteen less Galleons than it did."

Soon they had exited Gringotts and made their way back out of the Leaky Cauldron. The Limousine was still parked where they had left it. The man dressed as the Chauffeur was leaning on the hood reading a newspaper.

The ride to Little Whinging was a more somber affair. Though Hermione still tuned in another radio station, Harry was obviously thinking of the vault and his parents. When the driver signaled that they were only ten minutes away, Harry's bondmates gently brought him out of his thoughts.

Shortly the Limousine turned onto Privet Drive and stopped in front of Number Four. When Hermione went to open the door, Alain shook his head. "Wait." He said smiling.

As they looked out the windows, they could see various neighbors starting to look out their windows, or coming out to see what was afoot at the Dursleys. Finally they saw the front door of Privet Drive open and the overly large shape of Uncle Vernon appeared dressed in one of his best suits.

The Chauffeur got out of the limousine and as Vernon Dursley approached he asked. "Ees zis number four Privet Drive? Mr. Vernon Dursley?"

Vernon swelled as he looked importantly around at his neighbors. Though it was only a frenchman, he obviously had an important passenger. "Why yes, that's me and that is this house."

"Ah, excellent." The Chauffeur replied and went to open the door to the back. "My employer would like a few words if 'e may."

"Of course, Of course." Vernon said and by then Petunia who had obviously tried to quickly throw on a dress and beautify herself walked out and joined her husband.

Alain smiled at Harry. "What is ze muggle saying, it's showtime?"

Harry couldn't help but smile at Fleur's father. Mr. Delacour got out quickly when the door opened. The Chauffeur quickly closed it again to make sure the Dursley's couldn't see who else was in the car.

"Good day Monsieur." Alain said in a voice that carried well. "I am a representative of ze French Government and I've come to safely deliver several special...people to your care for ze near future."

By now many of the surrounding neighbors were out in the lawn watching and listening to what was going on.

"Ze gentleman in question recently risked 'is own life in preventing a known terrorist from carrying out a plot zat would 'ave endangered ze country while also willingly throw 'is body in front of a...a bullet to prevent 'arm to an innocent person." Alain continued and the crowd of neighbors drew closer listening to his every word. Vernon was starting to get suspicious but could not stop what was happening. "In fact my government and 'er majesty's government both 'ave acknowledged 'is deeds, unfortunately zey could not do it publicly because of the nature of ze zreat." Alain nodded at the chauffeur who reopened the door. Fleur was the first one to step out followed closely by her sister. "Zese are two of 'is girlfriends, oh and zere is 'is zird." Hermione climbed out of the car. "Of course you must know I am speaking of your nephew Mr. 'Arry Potter who attends one of ze more prestigious boarding schools in ze country." Harry couldn't help but chuckle as he climbed out of the car. Vernon face was as red as could be as he stared at the freak in front of him.

All around them they heard the neighbors talking to each other. Sounds of 'St. Brutus?' 'Government?'

As Harry saw Dudley come running out of the house, he couldn't help but lean over and kiss Fleur who returned the kiss with a lot of passion.

One of the neighbors yelled out. "We thought he went to St. Brutus's. Dursley has been telling me for years to not let my daughter near him."

"Call St. Brutus and ask if 'e goes zere." Alain replied to the neighbor. "Mr Potter attends ze most selective school in all of Great Britain." He then looked at Vernon and wondered if the man could get any redder. "Shall we go inside." He asked the overweight man.

Vernon nodded as he thought of what he was going to do to the little man and the freak who was trying to humiliate him once he got them away from his neighbors.

Alain turned to the Chauffeur. "Jean Pierre, would you get zeir bags."

"Oui."

When they had entered the house and the door was closed, Vernon rounded on Alain Delacour with his fist raised only to find a wand under his chin.

"Do you think that little stick scares me?" Vernon sneered and tried to grab it.

Alain stepped one step back and a yellow light came from the tip of his wand and hit Vernon's hand. He instantly started screaming in pain as he looked at his fingers which all appeared to be pointing in different directions.

"Zat was a bone breaking 'ex." Alain said. "Try to touch my wand again and I'll do much much worse." He looked over at Fleur. "Could you put up some silencing charms. Zis might become noisy."

"Oui Papa." Fleur replied.

Petunia started screaming at that time, and Alain wave his wand toward her. Her mouth continued to move, but no sounds came out.

"You FREAK!" Vernon yelled. "You undo whatever you just did to my wife."

Alain rounded on Vernon and raised his wand. "Zat word almost cost me my daughters." He said dangerously. "YOU almost cost me my daughters."

"I don't know what you're talking about." Vernon said trying to be defiant but losing ground fast. "I've never met you or you daughters."

"Non, you 'aven't and I'm not going to explain, but if you ever call anyone zat name again, you will not like ze results." Alain said. "Especially 'arry." His eyes narrowed dangerously. "Understand zat in ze last few months zat young man 'as save my daughters lives more zan once. He 'as become like a son to me. Now if you zink I

will allow you to ever insult 'im again, you are very very much mistaken."

"I don't know what that Frea..." Vernon started only to have Alain's wand back pointed at his other hand.

"I can break zem all, and zen your toes and ze rest of your bones in your body and zen start all over again."

"You...you can't." Vernon said as he stared at the wand. "You need us for those blood thingies, it was in that letter."

"Ah, so you know about ze blood wards zat ze 'Eadmaster put up."

"Like I said, it was in that bloody letter that came with the Fr...boy. You need us."

"Non, you don't understand." Alain said in a very dangerous voice. "We do not need your blood or ze blood of zat fat cochon." He pointed over at Dudley who was trying to make himself as small as he could in the corner of the room. "I can transfigure you two into pigs and put you in a local petting zoo. I only need Petunia's blood." He looked over at the long necked woman. "It is only 'er blood zat matters and even zen I can transfigure 'er into a hamster and put 'er in a cage."

"You can't do this." Vernon cried as he went even paler. Harry noticed a strong smell of urine in the room. "There are laws. We talked to those people when the...the boy blew up Marge."

"Non," Alain replied as he tapped his wand on Vernon's nose causing Vernon's eyes to continually go crossed. "You see, I am a French Diplomat. I 'ave diplomatic immunity in zis country. I can gut you right now and let you bleed to death and zen go back to my life with no problems."

Vernon's face was as pale as Harry had ever seen him. Harry glanced at Fleur. "Can he actually do that to Uncle Vernon?"

"Non, well ze english government couldn't do anyzing but our, I mean ze french would." Fleur explained. "But your uncle does not know zat does 'e?"

"Now I zink I 'ave you attention so we shall talk." Alain said as he motioned the two elder Dursleys toward the couch. "If you listen, I will fix your 'and before I leave."

Vernon looked down at his misshapen fingers. He swallowed nervously and nodded.

Alain looked at Petunia. "Can you listen quietly or do I need to leave you silenced."

Petunia tried to say something but still nothing came out. Finally she nodded.

"Very well." Alain said and countered the silencing charm. "Now," He started when the Dursleys were sitting on the sofa, trying to bury themselves in the back of it. "Understand zat 'Arry is 'ere not for 'is protection, but for yours."

"That's nonsense. What does him being here do for us?" Vernon asked.

"Voldemort is back and looking for 'arry." Alain said.

"But...but he's dead." Petunia said. "He's...he's the one who Harry killed all those years ago."

"Banished yes." Alain said. "But not killed. 'E is back."

"So." Vernon said. "Even more reason for the...FR..." Vernon had to struggle with himself to get the right word, "boy to leave."

"Oh well if you truly want 'im to leave 'e will." Alain looked over at Harry. "Won't you?"

"In an instant." Harry replied.

"Then get out." Vernon said. "I don't want anything to do with your kind ever again."

"Are you really zat stupid?" Mr. Delacour asked. "If 'e leaves, zose wards fall."

"So?" Vernon asked but Petunia had gone very white.

"They'd look here wouldn't they?"

"Ah...so Lily didn't get all ze Evan's brains did she." Alain replied.

Petunia had already turned to her husband. 'Vernon, they would come here looking for him."

"So we just tell him he doesn't live here anymore." Vernon stated.

Alain shook his head slightly as he let out a sigh. He'd had to deal with difficult people before, but outright stupidity always bothered him. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small book and laid it on the table in front of the sofa. With a wave of his wand it grew several sizes.

"Ze people who would come 'ere are called Death Eaters." He started. "Zey zink muggles, zat is people like you, are just animals." He opened the book to the first page. There was a very graphic picture from a magical newspaper. "Zis is one of 'zir favorite ways to kill muggles. Eet is called the bowel removal hex. Zey usually wrap ze bowels around zeir victim's neck once zey are dead. See zat's it around zat man's neck." He turned the page and four people laid dead in the next photo. "It took a day for ze Aurors to discover zat zese muggles died because someone transfigured zeir brains into grass as a joke." Page after page of muggles who had been killed by Death Eaters in gruesome or bizarre manners were shown to the Dursleys. Alain finally looked at the Dursleys. "Of course zere is always ze torture curse which feels like a million white hot needles sticking in you all at once." He shrugged "Now if 'Arry stays for two weeks, ze wards will stay up until September when ze world will know 'e is back at school or 'e can leave now. Eet is your choice."

Harry almost laughed as Vernon and Petunia even offered their bedroom to Harry and his girlfriends. When the Dursleys were told Harry and the young ladies would be staying in a tent in the back yard, Vernon offered to get the tent and help set it up. When the tent was finally up with muggle repelling charms set around the door and the teens trunks in place in the rooms of the tent, Alain had some final words to Vernon and Petunia.

"My eldest daughter, she is of legal age." He said. "She can and will do magic. Do not insult her, do not insult any of zem or I will be back

and you will very much regret it. Zough I zink if you do insult 'er or any of zose young women, 'Arry will make you regret it."

Vernon looked nervously at the man but nodded.

"I do 'ave to ask one question though, Petunia, you knew what a wizard could do." Alain started. "Did you really zink zat if you abused 'Arry like you did, 'e wouldn't someday come back and destroy you? You are very very fortunate zat young man is who 'e is. I tried to tell 'im to let you be. Let ze wards fail. I zink you will find in the long run you yourselves will owe your lives to 'im as well." With those words, Alain Delacour left the Dursleys. He bid the young bondmates goodnight, and strolled back to the Limousine. There were still plenty of neighbors around asking questions. Jean Pierre had been busy answering those questions as he had been rehearsed to do. Never again would the people of Privet Drive believe Harry Potter was anything less than a hero.

"Jean Pierre, Mr. Potter is safely with 'is relatives, I zink we can leave now."

As the Limousine drove away, Alain Delacour felt like he did a good job. He just wondered why no one had stuck up for the boy earlier.

Chapter 35

July 3rd 1995 continued

That evening in the Burrow was not a pleasant one. The children including Bill who was well into his adulthood had been sent to their rooms after dinner. Ginny glanced at Fred and George as they went up the steps. Their eyes told her they knew what was about to occur. Ginny had told the twins about their mother's latest outburst at the train station. Fred motioned for his sister to come into their room which she hurriedly did.

"Now little sister, you shall never remember what you're about to see." George whispered as he smiled at her. He reached into his trunk that he'd brought from the school that day and pulled out a long flesh colored string.

"We've been working on this." Fred said as he started snaking the string down the steps outside their room.

"Here." George offered an end of the string to Ginny. "Put it to your ear."

As she did as she was instructed, her eyes lit up as she realized she could hear the conversation downstairs.

In the kitchen Arthur had poured himself a cup of tea before sitting down at the table across from Molly. He gently blew on the steaming cup as he delayed what he knew would be unpleasant. Arthur Weasley loved his wife, but ever so often she'd do things that Arthur could not understand and this was one of them.

"Why Molly? Why didn't you apologize?"

"How was I to know he was the Deputy Minister of Magic of France?"

"Even though it was in several articles in the Prophet, THAT is not what mattered." Arthur retorted. "You have no reason to be insulting that young lady."

"But Arthur she's Veela...she's only playing with Harry. She's going to hurt him, I can tell."

Arthur shook his head slightly. "You can tell? How?"

"She's a Veela Arthur. You know what that means." Molly sniffed as she repeated herself. "She's taking advantage of him. Poor boy doesn't know about these things. We should have insisted that Dumbledore have him come here."

Upstairs Ginny and the twins were shaking their heads at their mother.

"Molly what do you have against that young lady's heritage. As far as I know you don't know any other Veela, so how can you know what they will do?" Arthur asked impatiently.

"It's..it's in all the magazines." Molly replied. She got up and walked into the living room and returned with a stack of newspapers and magazines. She pulled out one of the Witch Weekly periodicals and showed it to her husband. Displayed prominently on the front cover of an obvious Holiday issue, was a lovely young witch surrounded by gifts as she smiled at the readers. In large letters underneath was the title, "Holiday Cheering Charms, make this Christmas the happiest ever." Other smaller headlines about stories inside included "Are your cleaning spells really cleaning well?", "Expert tips on completing those five minute holiday feasts" and "What every Witch needs to know about Beauty Potions." But the one where Molly Weasley had her finger was "Three ways to know if a Veela is after your wizard."

"See...It says that a wizard will be much happier than he normally is when he's enchanted." Molly explained. "And it also says they will turn against their current loved ones." She looked at her husband. "Don't you see, Harry is showing clear signs he is under her spells. Why else would he be so impossible to reason with? He's even stopped being friends with Ron." She pulled out another magazine and pointed to a headline that said. "Veela – why you should be concerned." Molly continued pulling out magazines with similar stories. "They all are the same."

"They are all the same because they are all filled with the same house-witch tales." Arthur replied. "They also say Werewolves and Giants are bad, does that mean we need to keep Harry away from Remus and Hagrid?"

"It's not the same Arthur." Molly replied angrily. "Its..its.. she's obviously got him enchanted. I could see it in the poor boy's eyes. He needs to come here and get away from that girl. That way he can find someone who really...." Molly's voice trailed off.

After all the years they had been married, Arthur knew most of his wife's looks. Her current look usually meant she was planning something. "Molly Weasley, you are going to apologize to that young lady and whatever you are planning, you need to stop. I don't know why you think it is so important for Harry to come here. It isn't like he's going to find someone...." Arthur looked at his wife through narrowed eyes as he realized there was one person who Harry would see at the Burrow. "You're trying to set him up with Ginny aren't you?"

Upstairs Ginny's eyes flew open wide. It was one thing to have her mother suggest it in a letter, but another for her to try to actively try to get them together.

"What if I am?" Molly asked her husband defiantly. "Ever since that day he saved her life it's been obvious he cares about her and you know how she's always been fond of him. She'd treat Harry much better than that harlot who's trying to turn him against our family."

"ENOUGH!" Arthur exclaimed loudly. It was a very rare day when Arthur Weasley raised his voice to his wife, but this was one of those occasions. "She is not turning Harry against our family. I spoke to her today. She is friends with Ginny, Fred and George. She only has a problem with you Molly. I would too if you kept insulting me the way you do her."

"..." Molly started but Arthur cut her off.

"Want to know how much she's turning him against us? The young man just put ten thousand galleons in our vault because, and I'm quoting him here, 'when I desperately needed a family, you gave me one.' Does that sound like someone who's against us? He plans on doing the same thing for the next ten years. Obviously someone has told him about the Ministry limits on gifts."

"You march down to Gringotts and tell them to put it back." Molly said. "We can't take his money."

"We don't have a choice." Arthur told his wife. "He insisted that we take it for what this family owes him for saving Ginny's life. I could not say no. Again he cleared our debt to him by giving us what he knew we could use. He even insisted that Ginny and Ron each get one thousand galleons of it EACH YEAR. I ask you again does that sound like someone being turned against us?"

"But.."

"The one thing he did tell me was he would not step foot in the Burrow again until you apologized to Miss Delacour and invite her and her sister to come as well." Arthur got up from the table in disgust. "You need to decide how much you can care about that young man, because you are on the verge of pushing him away forever." He started to walk away then stopped. "Harry is happy Molly. It is obvious to anyone who actually looks at him that he cares for that young witch and she cares for him." Without waiting for her to reply he left the kitchen.

Upstairs Fred was busy pulling the string back into their room. The twins turned to Ginny. "A thousand Galleons? A year for ten years?"

Ginny blushed and nodded.

Fred and George let out identical whistles "Guess that means we don't have to buy Gin-Gin a present this year."

Ginny glared at her brothers. "I can always give you a bat-bogey." She reminded them.

"True, and since he gave us his winnings, I guess we can't complain."

"Invested his winnings brother." Fred said. "Just because he doesn't realize he invested it, doesn't mean he didn't."

"True, very true." George replied.

*** E E ***

Dudley Dursley was having one of his worst summers. Expecting accolades from his mother and father when he arrived home after

being named Junior Heavyweight Inter-School Boxing Champion of the Southeast division, he was greeted instead by his parents grounding him for the first two weeks because his mother had found his adult magazine collection. His first night back he'd had an accident in his bed. Waking up to wet sheets and a bad smell was horrible. Twice more since he had arrived home, Dudley had dreamed of waterfalls and filled his bed again each time. Between the punishment and the bed-wetting, Dudley was becoming very frustrated. He couldn't even take his frustrations out on his cousin because he wasn't due to come back until almost a month later. Normally he could have wiggled out of his punishment, but it seemed his parents had had a rough spring and refused to listen to him. Even when his punishment ended, they had told him there was no money for his weekly cinema trips. Dudley never went to the cinema anyway, but used the money to buy Kents.

Then his cousin had arrived, Dudley had been waiting for the day for weeks. He planned to take his frustrations out on the freak. He planned on using his cousin to keep his boxing skills up to par. Then that Limousine had arrived with the freak and those cute tarts. Dudley didn't understand all that went on between that wizard and his parents, but the wizard was gone now and the freak was all alone with those birds.

"Girls like that want a real man, not some undersized wimp." Dudley thought. "Even if the tarts are freaks, they'll still appreciate me. Tomorrow I'll introduce myself."

*** E E ***

"Thank you." Harry said sincerely to his bondmates. "I...I just want you all know that I appreciate you spending this time with me."

"Silly man." Fleur said as she pushed Harry onto the sofa that was in the tent's main room. "Zough we might be near zose...zose zings in ze 'ouse," She sat down in his lap before she continued. "We now 'ave you all to ourselves for two weeks. 'Owever if you want to keep zanking us, zen less noise and more lips are needed."

"Yes ma'am." Harry replied as he wrapped his arms around his oldest bondmate and promptly started obeying her command. "This is going to be the best summer ever." He thought when Hermione made Fleur give up her spot so she could have a turn several

minutes later. By the time Gabrielle was sitting in his lap, all thoughts of the Dursleys had totally left his mind.

"Well if this is our home away from home then we should unpack." Hermione said as she started for her bedroom in the tent. The tent had two bedrooms, a living room, full bathroom including water closet and a kitchen with a table. The girls would share one bedroom while Harry had the other one, though it would always be two people to the fairly large beds in each room as the young witches planned to rotate sleeping in Harry's bed each night.

"Home?" Said a little elf after a loud crack was heard, followed shortly by another one. "Winky is here." She looked around and found Hermione. "Where does your parents live. Misses told Winky you'd let Winky go clean Misses parent's home."

Hermione's hand shot to her mouth as she realized she never told them. "Uh, I forgot to tell them. I'm sorry Winky." She apologized. "We are supposed to go see them in a few nights and I can tell them then."

"You can go tell them now." Insisted the little elf.

"I can't." Hermione replied. "I have no way to get there."

"You could take the Knight Bus." Harry suggested.

"Winky will take you." The elf said.

"It's only going to be...wait a moment. Did you say you'd take me there?" Hermione asked. "How?"

"Misses take Winky's hand and Winky takes Misses to her parents' house." Winky explained as if to a child.

"You...you can take someone with you when you go places?" Hermione asked.

"Yes Winky can take you to your parents." The little elf repeated as she took Hermione's hand in hers. "If you tell Winky where they live."

Hermione eyes developed a dazed look as she told Winky the address. A couple seconds later she found herself standing in the

middle of the living room of her parents' home. Because of the expected dangers, Richard and Jean Granger were already reaching for their necklaces before they realized it was their daughter.

"Hermione?" Her mother asked hesitantly still with her necklace in her hand. "Is that really you?"

Hermione snapped out of her stupor and looked around. "Yes mum." She replied. "I think I just found out something new about house-elves. It seems they can apparate us places."

"This isn't the same House elf we met before." Richard said.

"No, mum dad, this is Winky. She's one of...of our elves." Hermione said. "We bonded with her and she wants work to do, so I told her she could clean your house."

"That's fine dear." Jean replied. "How much will we need to pay her."

"Respectable house-elves do not take money." Winky said sternly to Hermione's mother. "And Winky is a respectable elf with a family."

Jean Granger looked questioningly at her daughter.

"It's alright mother, but it's something we'll have to discuss another time because I'm still learning what it all means myself."

"Has Miss Hermione's parents had dinner?" Winky asked.

"Uh...no we were just going..."

"Winky will do it." Winky said and immediately looked around. "Where is your kitchen."

"Winky, I need to go back to Harry." Hermione reminded the elf.

"Winky will be right back to make yours dinner." Winky told the stunned adults. She grabbed Hermione's hand and an instant later Hermione found herself back in the tent.

"I think my parents are going to be in for an interesting time." Hermione said as she watched the elf who appeared happier than she had ever seen her disappear.

They heard the backdoor open on the house and quickly looked out the window on the tent. They could see Petunia Dursley walking out the door and toward the tent. As she neared it, she suddenly turned back toward the house only to get a confused look on her face when she started to reopen the back door. This happened two more times before Harry decided to go see what she wanted.

"Can I help you Aunt Petunia?" He asked.

"Oh Harry." She said. "I came out to ask if you would be eating dinner with us but I kept remembering something in the house."

"Muggle repelling wards." Harry replied. "You can't get near the tent without help."

"Oh." Petunia replied as she looked past Harry at the tent.

"To answer your question though, no, we will be eating in the tent." Harry explained.

"We'll leave the back door unlocked tonight so you and your...friends can use the bathroom when you need to."

"You don't need to do that, we have a bathroom as well." Harry replied. It was very obvious that Petunia had never seen the inside of a magical tent.

"Surely you don't go in front of those girls?" Petunia retorted. "I know your kind are different but you must have some decency."

"We aren't roughing it out here Aunt Petunia." Harry explained. "Should I show her the tent?"

"Yes or she'll think we are all sleeping on top of one another."

"And what would be wrong with zat?" Fleur asked. "I like my 'ead on 'Arry when I sleep."

"But the tent is..." Petunia started.

"Here, take my hand." Harry said.

Petunia looked at first like she'd been asked to hold a bag of excrement but curiosity finally won. She gingerly took her nephew's hand.

To say Petunia Dursley was surprised would be an understatement. She gasped as they entered the tent and a small house was revealed. She then noticed the three young women all glaring at her. She could feel their dislike of her as she watched the oldest of them fingered her wand. Petunia felt very nervous as she stood there remembering that the one with the wand out could legally do magic. "Maybe I should go back out now." She said. Then she let out a large shriek when Dobby came out of the kitchen.

Harry nodded. "You can leave on your own." He almost laughed as his aunt retreated very quickly out the entrance of the tent. He then remembered what his mother said about his aunt had wanted to be a witch and was jealous of her sister. Though it still did not excuse the past fourteen years, it did help Harry to understand the underlying feelings.

"Are Master and Misses ready for dinner?" Asked a confused Dobby as he watched the long necked woman almost running out of the tent.

After the meal of braised rabbit stew followed by cheese and a baguette the bondmates sat back very satisfied. With a full stomach after an emotional day, Harry declared he was going to bed.

The three young women looked at each other. "Shall we draw straws?" Hermione suggested.

"Non." Gabrielle declared determinedly. "I've never got to sleep with 'Arry alone yet."

"She has a point." Harry said as he offered his youngest bondmate his hand. "Come Angel, shall we go to bed?"

The smile Gabrielle had as she stood up and took Harry's hand was tent brightening.

Twenty minutes later Harry was laying in his bed when Gabrielle came into the room. As Harry looked up he realized he would never get over how beautiful all three of the women in his life were. Gabrielle stood there in a nightshirt that barely covered her rear. Harry could see a small amount of powder blue knickers peaking from below it. Her legs were perfect as they trailed from the bottom of the shirt down to the floor. As his eyes started their way back up they encountered Gabrielle's small breasts expanding the shirt in a most perfect manner. Harry's eyes continued even further upward and found the best part of his Angel. Two beautiful blue eyes that were looking at him. Harry couldn't help but remember the first dinner he had had with Fleur and Gabrielle, the nervousness that had existed in those same eyes at that time. Now they were looking at him with love and affection.

"You are so beautiful." Harry said. "I love your eyes."

Gabrielle smiled shyly as she cross the room to his bed. A small part of her was nervous. She'd never slept alone with her bondmate and wasn't sure what to expect. Harry was only wearing pajama pants because of the summer warmth. As she looked at him now with his chest bared she couldn't help but be appreciative herself. He wasn't muscular or tall but having been held by him, she knew his arms were strong. She also knew the chest that almost glowed in the flickering candlelight held a heart that was much larger than his body could physically hold. "And you are very 'andsome." She sat down on the edge of the bed and just looked at Harry for a few seconds.

Harry reached over and took her hand in his. He brought to his lips and gently kissed it. Then with a gentle pull he pulled her down to the bed. "Je t'aime." he said then added. "I really hope I just told you I love you because I'd hate to think I mentioned something that I shouldn't have."

That made Gabrielle relax as she giggled while she nodded her head. She pulled Harry into a kiss and when it ended she said. "Je t'aime de tout mon coeur."

Harry looked puzzled for a second then said. "Coeur... I read that one. It's..it's.." Harry's mind tried to recall what that word meant.

Gabrielle took Harry's hand and placed it above her left breast. "Zis is a clue."

Harry's eyes found hers. "Heart?"

"Oui, I love you with all of my 'eart."

Harry smiled at her and traced several small hearts where his hand was. "My angel has a beautiful heart."

"We should go to sleep." Gabrielle said after another few seconds of silence filled with tenderness.

Harry took off his glasses and set them aside. Then after blowing out the candle, he pulled Gabrielle into his arms. That night he had the very best night of sleep he ever had while on Privet Drive.

*** E E ***

Amelia Bones sat at her desk late in the evening looking over the notes from the veritaserum interview of Macnair. The confessions of the Death Eater was more than enough to ensure he spent the rest of his life in Azkaban if not sentenced to Dementors. The executioner had turned his talents for killing creatures to murder for hire for several people that he identified. He also confessed to having been ordered to kill Pettigrew by Voldemort and afterwards he was to go with another Death Eater to make contact with the Giants. The last part she had forwarded to the Minister to send to the ICW in hopes they could seal off the area near the giants preventing them from being recruited this time.

She lifted another sheet of parchment and grimaced as she saw the name of two of her own Aurors listed among the people who had hired Macnair. One had hired him to kill his wife while the other had been to kill a criminal who had escaped justice. It seemed Macnair didn't care who he killed, he seemed to just like the act of 'd sent Senior Auror Shacklebolt and his young partner Nymphadora Tonks to arrest them.

Finally she turned her attention to the third and final list that had come from Macnair's interview. The names of all of the Death Eaters who had came when called after Voldemort's rebirthing. Though she had nothing she could charge them with right now, she'd have each of them followed. "Malfoy, Avery, Goyle, Crabbe..." Then she came across a name that was unexpected. A thought ran through Amelia's

mind. "If Severus Snape was a spy for the light, and that fact was well-known because of his trial, why did he respond to the summons that night, and more importantly, why didn't Voldemort kill him when he did." She knew Dumbledore had vouched for the man at his trial, but it was an issue she would need to raise with the Headmaster at a very early opportunity. If Severus Snape was a Death Eater, there is no way her niece would return to Hogwarts with that man teaching there.

*** E E ***

Dolores Umbridge was extremely unhappy. Ever since that night a week ago it seemed the Minister was not listening to her advice. Fudge had assigned her to temporarily take over the late Barty Crouch Sr position as head of the Department of International Magical Cooperation. A worst position she could not have asked. With all of the half-breeds, foreigners and muggleborns she'd had to deal with in the past week her temper was running very foul. All she heard from the Minister now was Dumbledore this and Dumbledore that along with treating the name Harry Potter like it was something to be worshiped.

"The boy is nothing but a half-blood and he's dating that thing." The Senior Undersecretary thought. "I have got to find a way to end this hero worship of the snot nosed brat." The problem she ran into was she didn't want to follow Voldemort even though she believed he had the right idea of ridding the world of muggles and muggleborns. "The more people believe in Potter, the more they will follow his lead away from our traditions. Harry Potter needs to disappear, that way we can fight Voldemort and still keep our way of life." She knew Potter would be protected, so she had to be careful. "I'll think of something. I know I have too."

*** July 4th 1995***

Gabrielle was the first to awaken the next morning and found herself beside her bondmate. He was laying on his back while she had her head on his shoulder with her arm draped over his chest possessively. As she laid there breathing in the musky smell of the man she loved, she couldn't help but let her mind take her back to her childhood fantasies that were still only a few months in the past. Though she clearly knew the Harry she was in love with wasn't the boy she had read and dreamed about for all of those years, the

fantasies themselves just moved themselves to the real Harry Potter. As she thought of a life with this man she couldn't help but smile and hold him a bit tighter. Soon she felt him stir and his arms encircled her as well.

"Zis I could get used to very quickly." Gabrielle said softly.

"So could I Gabi." Harry replied as he brought his lips to hers. "And hopefully this summer we'll wake up like this many times."

After a few more minutes of holding each other they finally climbed out of bed and dressed for the day. They found Fleur and Hermione already awake and sitting at the table drinking coffee. Fleur had the Daily Prophet unfurled and reading it. She looked up to see her little sister with a very large smile on her face.

"Did you sleep well ma soeur?"

"Oui, very much so." Gabrielle replied as she sat down. Dobby put a cup of coffee in front of her as well. "Merci beaucoup." Gabrielle said to the elf as she poured a bit of cream into her cup.

Dobby looked confused as he tried to figure out if one of his mistresses asked for something.

"She was saying thank you Dobby." Hermione said.

"Misses Gabrielle is welcome." Dobby replied.

"Our 'ouse-elves will help you with French if you wants zem to Dobby." Fleur said.

"Dobby would like that very much." Dobby said in a relieved voice.

Harry sat down between Fleur and Hermione which put him directly across from Gabrielle. Dobby put a cup of tea in front of him.

"Skeeter's article on you." Fleur said as she pushed the Daily Prophet toward Harry.

Harry was looked at the paper and saw a large picture of himself looking back at him. The article itself was a teaser as it highlighted the various articles to come in the next few weeks that would have

more details about the Boy-Who-Lived-Twice. Harry only skimmed the article as he knew Fleur and Hermione would have already checked it for any inaccuracies. "Milking it aren't they?"

"Oui, but it is a business." Fleur replied. "And so far zey are keeping it fairly accurate." She then held up a letter. "Papa sent zis. 'E mentioned who he is going to teach us zis summer."

"Who? Anyone I know?"

"Non, but his name is Marlon Pelletier." Fleur started. "E..." She looked down for a few seconds before she continued. "Do you remember when Papa was suggesting zat an Auror career might not be ze best?"

"Yeah."

"Eet was mostly Marl 'e was probably zinking of." Fleur explained. "E was a good friend of Papas when zey were growing up. After school Papa went more to ze political side, while Marl became an Auror. I don't know ze whole story, but I know zat Marl met an American witch and fell in love with 'er. 'E ended up moving to America and joining zeir Aurors."

"What's wrong with that?" Harry asked.

"Nothing, but it was a couple of years after 'e moved zere zat 'e arrested a young wizard who 'e saw threatening 'is girlfriend in public. Marl found numerous bruises hidden by glamor charms on 'er." Fleur looked around at everyone who was now listening intently. "E convinced ze young lady to press formal charges but because ze man came from an influential family 'e was never convicted."

"So what happened?" Hermione asked.

"Several days later ze body of ze young woman was found. She'd been beaten, raped, and obviously tortured." Fleur continued. "Marl felt guilty and became obsessed with nailing ze bâtard."

"I can understand." Harry said. "I'd do the same thing."

"Non, I 'ope not. It possessed 'im. 'E lost 'is job when he broke laws to try to get evidence, 'is wife left 'im finally when 'e stopped spending any time with 'er. 'E ended up losing everything."

"Did he ever catch the guy?"

Fleur shrugged. "Ze wizard's body was found one day two years or so after ze woman was found. 'E'd been tortured and violated in ze same fashion as zat young witch 'ad been."

"This Marl did it?" Hermione asked wondering exactly what kind of person Mr. Delacour had set them up to be trained by.

"Who did it was never determined." Fleur replied. "Zough as you can imagine, Marl was suspected of doing it."

"What happened to him?" Harry asked.

"Zey never found any evidence to Marl being ze culprit and somehow a couple of years later 'e rejoined ze American Auror department. 'E made a name for 'imself by always going after ze worst wizards." Fleur said. "Papa zinks 'e didn't really care about living anymore."

"How do you know all of this?" Hermione asked.

"E came and visited Papa two years ago. My father told me ze story so I'd not ask certain questions zat Marl would not want to answer."

"Why him? Harry asked.

"Maybe because 'e's still alive? I know zat Papa trusts 'im."

Harry nodded. "He's not been wrong yet so we'll see what happens."

"Papa said Marl will be contacting us sometime soon."

Dobby put a plate of hot eggs and sausages in front of Harry while giving Fleur, Hermione and Gabrielle a pastry that seeped chocolate from its center.

Hermione bit into hers and her eyes rolled up into her head as she savored the delicious chocolate taste surrounded by the flaky dough. "Dobby this is wonderful." She said finally.

The elf beamed in pride. "Dobby is glad misses likes it."

"So what are our plans for today?" Harry asked as he finished his first couple of bites of eggs.

"I don't know about today, but tonight I want to dance with you." Fleur said. "I 'oped we could have our own ball 'ere in ze tent."

"Dance?" Harry asked nervously.

"No one else around." Fleur said. "Just three witches who want to spend time with you. No pressures, if you don't enjoy eet, we'll stop."

Harry looked at each of his bondmates. Each had a hopeful look. "Ok." He replied finally. "Though don't expect much."

"Will you be 'olding me?" Fleur asked. "Without drooling?"

"I think I can manage that." Harry laughed.

"Zen we will already be better zan ze Yule Ball."

They all turned toward the window when they heard the backdoor open. They could see a stern looking Vernon Dursley walking toward them.

Vernon Dursley didn't get much sleep during the night after his nephew arrived. He tossed and turned as he went over all that had happened. By morning the overweight man had convinced himself that he had been setup and it was all the freak's fault. He'd been embarrassed in front of his neighbors and had been made a fool of in front of his family as well.

"Probably nothing to this danger that freak was talking about. Most Frenchmen cry wolf at the first sign of something wrong. Bloody useless the lot of them." He thought as he laid in his bed the next morning. "Just trying to take advantage of me. Well I'm not falling for it. As for that freak of a girl being old enough to do magic, I bet she isn't. She might have waved that silly stick around and muttered

some words, but what did she really do? Nothing!" As he continued to lay there fuming over the previous night, the smell of sausage and eggs wafted through his open window. He could still feel his wife was in the bed beside him so he knew it wasn't her cooking. "At least the boy knows his place." He thought. "I'll go down and get my breakfast before he and those other freaks try to eat any of it." He climbed out of bed and after throwing on his overly fluffy dressing gown, he started down the steps. When he got to the kitchen he found no one there. Nor was a single dish or pan out of place.

Vernon yanked open the back door and started walking toward the tent. He planned drag the boy out of there and take back any of the food they had stolen from his kitchen. He'd walked within twenty feet of the tent when he remembered that he might have left the water running in the bathroom. He'd made it back to the kitchen only to remember he hadn't been to the bathroom that morning so he couldn't have left the water running. Again he started back across the back garden when he suddenly he grew concerned that he'd left the telly on. He made it back to the kitchen before he remembered that he hadn't been watching the telly that morning.

In the tent The bondmates had heard the backdoor open and Vernon start toward the tent. They watched him reverse course four different times.

"Wonder what he wants?" Harry asked.

"Does it matter?" Gabrielle asked as he put her chin on Harry's shoulder so she could see out.

"As enjoyable as this is, he's only going to get angry soon." Harry replied. He looked at Fleur who was already pulling her wand out. With a quick nod he walked out of the tent and intercepted his uncle before he made it to the Muggle repelling line again.

"BOY!" Vernon snarled through gritted teeth so not to bring the attention of his neighbors.

"Yes Uncle Vernon?"

"Where's my breakfast boy." Vernon snarled. "I can smell my food. Did you sneak in and steal it?"

"We already had the food." Harry said evenly. He knew Fleur had exited the tent and was coming up behind him.

"No you didn't." Vernon said. "I helped carry that blasted tent around here. You didn't bring anything else but your trunks and that ruddy owl."

"Didn't Aunt Petunia tell you about our tent?" Harry asked.

"She said something about a ruddy home, but I know better." Vernon said. "I know you can't do magic and it would take magic to do things like that."

Harry glared at his uncle. "We haven't taken anything of yours, and no we did not need magic to do it. Even if we did Fleur is more than capable of doing magic."

"Rubbish." Vernon replied. "I bet it was all a bluff. She probably can't do magic either."

"Want me to show him?" Fleur asked.

"Not yet." Harry replied. "But be prepared." Then to his uncle. "Believe what you want, but we haven't been in your house this morning." He turned to walk back in to the tent.

"I WILL NOT BE DISMISSED BY A FREAK LIKE YOU!" Vernon roared as he lost his temper. He reached out his hand and grabbed Harry's shoulder to spin him back around. "YOU..AAAHH." The last came when Fleur sent a light blasting hex into the groin of Vernon Dursley. His hand immediately left Harry's shoulder and grabbed the area that had flared in great pain. His face was frozen in mid bellow as he tumbled into a fetal position on the ground.

"You will not touch my bondmate EVER!" Fleur snapped to the man on the ground. Her voice then turned very quiet and threatening as she leaned down to look at Vernon who still hadn't even blinked his watering eyes. "Zat was a very small spell. If you ever touch 'im again I will personally castrate you and feed what comes off to un chien." At the questioning look from Harry. "A dog."

Harry looked down at his Uncle whose eyes were now staring at nothing. "As I said we didn't take anything of yours and as you can

see Fleur can do magic and has a bit of a temper herself." He took Fleur by the hand and led her back into the tent where he showed her his appreciation for her defending him.

It took ten minutes for Vernon to start a verbal gasp that slowly turned into a moan and another ten for him to finally rise to his unsteady feet and disappear back into his house at a very gingerly pace. He never once looked back at the tent.

"I think I'll see if Dobby will take me to my parents' house." Hermione said after a while. "I can make sure they are getting along with Winky. I also need to get some summer clothes."

"Can I go with you?" Gabrielle asked. "I would like to see your 'ome."

"Of course." Hermione replied and looked at Fleur questioningly.

"Non, I will stay 'ere with 'Arry."

"You don't have to." Harry said. "I'll be fine."

"But I want to." Fleur responded. "I zought maybe we can go for a walk together."

"Not much to see around here." Harry replied. "But I'll definitely walk with you."

It was only a few minutes later Hermione and Gabrielle appeared in the Granger's living room.

"Hermione, is that you dear." Jean Granger's voice came from upstairs.

"Yes mum." Hermione replied.

Footsteps could be heard racing down the steps. "How can we get her to stop?" She asked frantically. "I'm not sure if she stopped cleaning last night at all. I tried to make up the guest room for her, but she wouldn't let me." Hermione's mother looked desperate. "She said when she got tired she'd sleep in the kitchen, but...but she was still cleaning this morning. I told her to take a break and I'd make her breakfast and she started wanting to know if I wasn't happy with her cooking last night. I didn't know what to do. I also offered her

something better to wear and she broke down crying and then started working twice as hard."

Hermione immediately turned to Dobby. "Dobby, please let Winky know that she is not getting clothes and that she is doing a wonderful job. Tell her that my parents are just not used to House-elves."

"Yes Miss Hermione." Dobby replied nodding. "Dobby will do that." He quickly ran past Mrs. Granger up the stairs in search of Winky.

"Did I do something wrong dear?" Jean Granger asked.

"Not intentionally, but yes you did." Hermione replied. "Giving clothes to a house-elf is the method used to dismiss them. When you offered her clothes, you were suggesting she wasn't doing a good enough job."

"But..." Jean started.

Hermione could truly understand her mother's confusion. "You didn't do it intentionally, but Winky was dismissed for something that really wasn't her fault and she considers herself a disgraced elf because of it."

"What can I do?"

"Just let her clean." Hermione replied. "Let her take care of you and your house. Compliment her on jobs well done." Hermione shrugged. "It really is what makes them happy."

"But it doesn't seem right." Hermione's mother said.

"Mum, I jumped to the same conclusion earlier this year." Hermione explained. "I still don't really understand it, but it really is what they want. Both of the elves are under orders to tell us if they ever want to be free of the bond we have with them, but I know they never will because they love being our elves."

Jean Granger looked up the steps. "If you say so dear." she said.

Hermione remembered her bond sister was there with her. "Mum you remember Gabrielle."

"Of course, is Fleur not with you?"

"No, she stayed with Harry. Gabrielle and I are going to hang out here for a while. She wanted to see our house and everything."

"She's more than welcome. Are you still planning your time here on Saturday?"

"Yes...oh I need to make sure I reserve the Dr. Who videos."

"I'll drive you down later dear. How long will you be staying today?"

"A couple of hours at least."

"Let me know when you're ready to go."

At the same time in Surrey, Fleur and Harry were walking down Privet Drive. Several of the neighbors were outside tending their lawns or sitting out enjoying a summer morning. As they walked past, all eyes were on the black-haired young man and the gorgeous woman clutching his arm in a very possessive fashion. A couple of them actually waved at Harry, something that had never happened before.

Soon the two of them found themselves on Magnolia Road. Harry saw the play park he came to on occasion to get away from the Dursleys. He pulled Fleur through the gate and started for the swings.

"Come on." He said.

"Why?" Fleur asked but followed.

"I...have you ever swung on a swing before?"

"Of course."

"I'll push you... I mean I've seen couples out here and watched husbands push wives and boyfriends...well it looks like fun."

Soon Fleur was laughing as Harry pushed her higher and higher. The simple pleasure brought a smile to Harry's heart and lips. A

feeling that soon was lost when Dudley's voice came from behind him.

"Hi there tart, what ya hanging out with that wimp for?" Dudley said. "Come on down here and let me show you a real man's muscles." He flexed his bicep to show her.

When Fleur stopped her swing, Piers Polkiss laughed. "She likes you Big D. Hey did you say she had a sister as well?"

"I'll introduce you later once we take care of the freak."

"Shut it Dudley." Harry snarled.

"Make me freak."

"Zere is but one man 'ere." Fleur said as she wrapped her arms around Harry. "You are nozing but a pig."

"We'll have to see about that want we Double P." His face broke out in a piggish smile as he looked back at Harry. "And there's nothing either of you can do about it."

"Distract him, move so neither of them can see me." Fleur instructed Harry.

Harry moved took a step to his right and then two. Dudley and Polkiss' eyes followed him not thinking the blonde girl was a threat. "Think you really can do anything to me Dudders?" Harry asked and took two more steps to his right. Again Dudley and his friend turned toward him leaving Fleur behind the two of them.

Fleur looked around and seeing no one else, took out her wand and sent a spell the Harry recognized.

"Just distract him for five minutes if you can."

For the next few minutes Harry verbally jousting with Dudley. Taunting him just enough to keep him from actually doing anything yet.

"Love, it's been four and a half minutes." Fleur said.

"So Big D," Harry said as he reached down to the ground and picked up a small stick. "Wouldn't it be cool if magic was real?" He waved the stick around. "I could just say hocus pocus and turn you into a pig...oh sorry that's already been done."

"But...but..." Dudley stammered and then a look of horror crossed his face as he grimaced.

"What's wrong Big D?" Harry asked. "Eat something that didn't agree with you? Or did you think of something and your brain shut down from the effort?"

It was a losing battle for Dudley as he tried to control his betraying bowels. He flushed red in effort then turned and tried to run but it was too late as the liquefied contents poured down his legs.

"I didn't know that Big D stood for Big Diarrhea." Harry said as he watched his cousin gasp in horror at his feet.

"Oh man." Piers said as he looked at Dudley as if he had grown two heads. "I got to go."

When Piers had cleared the park Fleur pulled back out her wand to fully display it to Dudley. "Now zat your friend ees not 'ere I can do whatever I want." Before she had finished speaking Dudley was running as fast as he could toward the gate. The large brown spot clearly visible on his pants. Fleur looked over at Harry, "Are zey just stupid?"

"Unfortunately yes." Harry said. "And we need to be careful around Dudley. I don't see him not trying something to get back at us."

"Only a day and zey 'ave already tried twice to 'urt you? Even when zey know you are 'ere to protect zem?" Fleur questioned. "I zink Papa is right and we let zem deal with ze Death Eaters when zey come."

Harry ran his fingers through his hair as he watched his cousin clear the gate. "I want to stick around until Pettigrew's trial at least, but if they keep this up, we can leave after that. I'm not going to have any of you dealing with this."

"Maybe I should write Papa and suggest we do what 'e said last night about turning your oncle and cousin into pigs and your aunt into a rodent."

"Would you really want kids petting my uncle and cousin?"

Fleur laughed. "Non, zey might try to eat zere 'ands." She looked lovingly at Harry. "I love you 'Arry Potter."

Harry wrapped his arms around his bondmate and kissed her. "I love you too my flower. Now how about the roundabout?" He asked as he nodded over to the rotatable platform. "I'll push."

"Zat was fun." Fleur said twenty minutes later as they walked back out of the play park. The walk back to Privet Drive was mostly silent. They kept watch in case Dudley tried something. Harry walked with his arm around Fleur's waist while her hand was in her pocket with a firm grasp of her wand. They made it back to their tent undisturbed. A couple hours later Hermione and Gabrielle returned. Gabrielle spent several minutes describing video tapes to Fleur.

After another fabulous meal by Dobby, the girls excused themselves and all of them disappeared into their room.

"What are you doing in there?" Harry asked.

"You'll see, but no peeking." Hermione replied.

Thirty minutes later Hermione, Gabrielle and Fleur reappeared dressed in ball gowns. Hermione and Fleur had on the ones they had worn to the Yule Ball, while Gabrielle wore the same dress she'd worn to their dinner before the bonding.

"Wha..." Harry started as his jaw dropped open. "Wha..." he tried again but failed. Before him were the three most beautiful women that could possibly exist.

"It is time for ze ball no?" Fleur asked. Her silver grey satin dress almost shimmered in the soft light of the candles. "Now go put your robes on while we clear a spot and find some music."

Fifteen minutes later, after a very quick shower and change into his dress robes, Harry had returned. The furniture had been moved

aside and Hermione had found the proper music on the Wizarding Wireless that was in the tent.

"You're...you're all beautiful." Harry said.

"And you're 'andsome." Fleur replied and she took his hand and pulled him into the middle of the floor.

After a few awkward moments, Harry soon realized his oldest bondmate had been right. Dancing is much more fun when you have a woman you love in your arms. Each of his bondmates took turns in guiding the young wizard through various dance steps. As the evening progressed Harry knew he'd never be a great dancer, but he could feel how happy his bondmates were when they were in his arms moving to the music and to him that was all that mattered.

Hermione had the final dance, one with slow music.

"I wished, I'd realized..." Harry started. "I should have asked you."

"We can't change what was and I wouldn't want to." Hermione replied as they moved ever so slightly to the music. "As silly as it sounds, I really do like sharing you with Fleur and Gabrielle. I am an only child who never had friends, and now I have sisters."

The kiss that ended the dance was gentle but deep in the love the two shared.

"Zank you." Fleur said later as she snuggled up to Harry in his bed. "For ze wonderful evening."

"It was all of you, you made it special...and it wasn't like it was a real ball or anything." Harry said.

"Love, I enjoyed tonight with you and my sisters more zan I did ze Yule Ball." Fleur replied truthfully.

"But I'm not that good of a dancer." Harry insisted. "I barely can keep from stepping on your feet."

"Eet doesn't matter." Fleur explained. "All I need is your eyes and your 'eart, both telling me zat you love me to make everything perfect."

"I do love you." Harry responded softly as his fingers lightly stroked Fleur's arm. His lips followed as they started up her arm and continued onto her neck until he found the spot under her ear that he knew she enjoyed. By the time Harry finally blew out the candle and pulled Fleur into his arms, she was having a hard time focusing on anything but his body. When his hand slipped under her shirt and cupped her breast she swallowed hard and started reciting in her mind. "Not zis summer, not zis summer, not zis summer."

*** E E ***

Dolores Umbridge awoke from a sound sleep with the solution to her problem. She knew the perfect way to get rid of Harry Potter while dealing with her other issues as well. A smile passed over the toad like woman's lips as she reviewed the plan and found it flawless. She even knew the perfect time to do it as well. As she laid back down on her pillow, her thoughts turned to what laws she'd get passed to prevent those Veela things from ever coming into the country ever again. Easily done once she imperiused that young Veela into killing her own boyfriend in front of the entire wizarding world at Pettigrew's trial.

Chapter 36

July 5th 1995

The next morning Fleur and Harry were awakened by owls hooting and a yelp from Gabrielle. They were out of bed in an instant and in the living area brandishing wands. Gabrielle was holding her finger in her mouth while Hedwig was berating a large brown owl, whose returning booming hoots were very loud. Hermione was looking around trying to find a way to quiet the large owl.

"What's going on?" Harry asked as he tried to figure out what might have happened.

"That owl has a letter for Fleur." Hermione explained as she pointed at the large owl. "Gabrielle told the owl that she was her sister and reached for the letter saying she'd give it to her. When she did the owl bit her, then it started hooting as loud as it could."

Fleur walked over to the foreign owl and asked for her letter. The owl immediately stopped hooting as it examined Fleur for a short time and then it held out its foot. As she turned back to the rest of the bonded she said. "My guess is it's from Marl. Papa did say 'e would be writing."

"Eet bit me." Gabrielle complained as she held out her finger.

"Let me see." Harry said as he walked over and looked at her finger. He brought it to his lips and kissed it.

"Ze letter wasn't for you." Fleur replied shrugging. "It's obvious ze owl 'as been trained to only deliver messages to ze person it is supposed to no matter what."

"BANG!" The backdoor of the house could be heard flying open. "RUDDY OWLS!" Came the loud voice of Vernon Dursley. "GET OUT HERE BOY!"

Harry rolled his eyes as he looked at Fleur.

"I need to get dressed before I can go out zere." Fleur responded. She was standing there in just her pajama top. A thin short sleeve

shirt that was easily seen through. One she specifically wore for her night with Harry.

"BOY!" The voice of Vernon boomed out again. Looking out they could see him storming across the garden toward them only to get to the muggle repelling wards where he stopped and looked back at his house.

Two minutes later Harry along with Fleur who had one of Harry's shirts and a pair of pants thrown on, was strolling out of the tent. Fleur had her wand clearly out in front of her and a glare in her eyes as she walked beside her bondmate. Fleur clearly was not in a good mood.

"Yes?" Harry asked his uncle.

Vernon opened his mouth and was clearly about the start yelling when Fleur raised her wand along with an eyebrow. "I 'ave not 'ad my morning coffee yet and I was awakened by ze same owls. Zink very 'ard about what you are going to say."

He closed his mouth and swallowed while his knees moved inward in a protective gesture. "Uh..." He finally started. "owls... noise... woke... sleep." Vernon was throwing out random words from a prepared diatribe he had planned as he stared at the wand in Fleur's hand. His own hands had worked themselves down to join his knees in protecting what had been seriously injured the previous day.

"We're sorry." Harry said looking straight into his uncle's eyes. "We weren't expecting it either. As you can hear, we've dealt with the issue. Now if there's nothing else..."

Vernon was seriously torn. The boy was staring at him defiantly. That in itself made Vernon want to rip the freak's head off, but in the last two days he'd had his hand broken in numerous spots and his bits had been hexed so badly he'd had trouble using the bathroom. But too many years of dominating the boy prevented Vernon from allowing the freak to get the last word. "If you can't keep that ruddy owl quiet you can get out."

Harry chuckled at his uncle's blustering. "Do you really think I WANT to be here? When I do leave I will be spending the rest of the summer at the Delacours' home." His arms went around Fleur and

Gabrielle, who, along with Hermione had joined them. They were also glaring at Vernon. Each had brought their wands just in case.

"Who'd want to live in France." Vernon sneered. "Whole ruddy country is a waste. The fact you'll be going there will only add one more reason to stay away from the place."

Fleur couldn't help herself with a smirk she explained. "Our family 'ome is on one 'undred and sixty-two 'ectares east of Cassis with over four hundred meters of it on ze Mediterranean. Zat is where we could be staying. In two weeks we will be swimming in ze sea, but right now we are stuck 'ere protecting an ungrateful pompous English cochon."

Vernon Dursley's expression was beyond priceless as he sputtered in an attempt to speak but nothing came out except spittle. It was obvious that his mind was computing what that actually meant in terms of money and status, the two things he respected above all else. Worst to him was that it was the freak who was going to be enjoying it. It would be a while longer before he realized he'd been insulted.

"We'll do our best to keep the owls quiet." Harry said. With a nod of his head he indicated they should all go back to the tent. As they were walking toward it, Harry glanced back to a Vernon still standing where they left him. "At least he didn't get castrated." He said with a smile to Fleur.

"Eet would 'ave made ze dog sick." Fleur replied with her own mischievous smile.

"Maybe Marge will visit." Harry replied. "It might be funny to see Ripper getting sick that way." Harry had told the girls of his childhood experiences with Aunt Marge and her dogs, especially that one particular one. He was finding it easier and easier to discuss his past life with them since they already had seen quite a bit of it.

Fleur finally opened the letter when they were back inside the tent.

"It is from Marl." She said after scanning the letter. She then read it out loud.

"I presume your father has already informed you to expect this letter. Somehow he convinced me to return to France and train the famous Harry Potter along with you, your sister and another person he said was like another daughter to him. He believes your lives are in danger from Voldemort, which I presume is from the battle that I read about last week. I owe Alain so I agreed. I'll start the training here. If you opened this letter and you are not one hundred percent positive that you are inside a portkey proof ward, then you should consider yourself captured or dead by your enemies."

Fleur looked up and grimaced. "I presume we are, but I'm not positive." She said.

"Dumbledore wouldn't have overlooked that possibility." Hermione stated. "I'm sure of that."

"This guy sounds like the bogus Moody with his constant vigilance." Harry muttered.

"Which means the real one is probably the same or Dumbledore would have noticed." Hermione pointed out. She looked at Fleur. "What else does he say."

"More of ze same." She said before continuing the letter. "If you're trying to hide, I could have easily put a tracking charm on my owl, if I can do it so can anyone else. First thing all of you need to do is imitate the Potter boy and have your mail blocked."

"What does he mean?" Harry asked. "I don't have my mail blocked. I get letters during the summer. I was saved from starvation because of it."

"Of course it's being filtered or blocked." Fleur replied. "Zink about it. You 'aven't received a single letter from anyone except people you know. You're ze Boy-Who-Lived. You should be getting letters from everyone in zis country, especially after zose stories. Remember what 'Ermione got from just zat one article?"

"Eets true." Gabrielle said as her cheeks blushed. "I tried to send you a letter zree years ago, but our owl would not go."

"But how..." Harry started and knew the answer immediately. "Dumbledore. He must be controlling who can owl me."

"Makes sense." Gabrielle said. "E was trying to protect you, and as Marl said, if an owl can be tracked to you..."

"Yeah I guess." Harry replied with a sigh. "But I wished he'd tell me these things." He looked at his still slightly blushing youngest bondmate. "And what did you write in that letter?"

Gabrielle looked into Harry's eyes and replied. "I just told you about myself and asked if you'd ever want to come visit me."

Harry pulled Gabrielle into his arms. "I'd love to."

"So it's obviously blocked, so we can ask Dumbledore when we see 'im." Fleur said. She looked back at the letter. "Zere is more. I am not coming over there for my health. If I'm going to train a bunch of kids, I expect you to give it your best effort. Do what I say and we'll get along, whine and you can find another instructor. Now as I understand it, you can't practice magic until you get to France, so for now work on your physical skills. You can start with running. I expect you to be able to run two kilometers in twelve minutes by the time I see you. If you think you're too good to be physically fit then you aren't worth my time in training."

"Two kilometers?" Hermione asked.

"Oui." Fleur responded. "Zat's what it says."

"After all of our trips down to the Chamber and up to the seventh floor, it can't be that bad." Harry added confidently.

"...no...not...that bad?" Hermione gasped at Harry an hour later as they stumbled back into the tent. She had a pain in her side and was pouring sweat. She knew she had at least two blisters. "First...first of all Scotland is...is a heck of a lot cooler." She continued to try to talk and gasp for air at the same time. "And we get...get to sit down after we walked to those places."

Harry was faring slightly better than Hermione as was Fleur. Gabrielle was much worse. Harry had tried to get her to stop when she was obviously laboring halfway through the run but she refused. She had told him through gritted teeth that she would not quit. Currently though, she was leaning on Harry to even stay up as he

guided her toward the sofa. Tears were in her eyes as she limped along beside him.

Harry could feel the pain she was in, so once he sat her down, he knelt in front of her and gently removed her shoes. He gasped as he removed her first sock and could see two large blisters had developed and one of them had burst.

"You should have quit." Harry said gently as Fleur knelt beside him.

"Non." Gabrielle replied wincing as Harry pulled her second sock off. "I will not be ze.. ze weakling."

"You're not weak Angel." Harry said softly. "But you don't have to do it all the first time." He could see her ankle was slightly swollen. He looked at Fleur.

"Let 'er be for now. 'Er Veela magic will probably fix it by morning." Fleur said. "As long as it's not too severe, ze magic will fix anything zat prevents us from being beautiful."

"That's a problem then." Harry countered. "Since I think both of you are beautiful right now even with blisters, sweat and swollen ankles." He looked at Fleur. "In fact I thought you were most beautiful in the final task when you had scratches here..." he touched his finger to her cheek where the scratches had been. "and you had a smudge of dirt there." again his finger touched another spot.

Fleur eyes closed as she enjoyed his touch and relished the love she felt from him in the bond.

"Fortunately." Gabrielle started then winced again as she moved her ankle. "Our magic is more picky zan our bondmate."

"Would ice help?" Harry asked. "To maybe stop the pain for the time being."

"For now, later I'll see about mixing a pain reducing potion." Fleur replied. "But I need to rest first. I'll need a steady 'and."

Though tired and with his own hamstrings sore, Harry spent the afternoon taking care of the three women he loved. He carried Gabrielle to the bedroom and had Dobby freeze ice for him to put on

her ankle. Fleur made the potion a few hours later to include more for the coming days. None of them were up to dancing that evening, so after Dobby made a dinner consisting of some kind of fish soup along with fresh loaves of bread, they sat around the living room reading. Harry had first picked out a book about Quidditch, but as he looked and saw all of his bondmates with various educational books, he felt guilty. He went back to his trunk and started digging through his other books but nothing looked interesting. When he pulled out his Divination book he felt a way of disgust pass over him. He sat on his bed and stared at the book as he thought of the class and its instructor. He didn't think he could return to Trelawney's class knowing that she inadvertently had caused all the pain in his life. Even now he could see the vision of her rising above Dumbledore's pensieve and reciting the prophecy. To have her continually referring to his death in class when he knew she'd truly predicted the possibility of it would be emotionally painful. "I don't think I can make up ways that I might die anymore."

"Zen don't." Fleur voice floated over the bond. "Take another class." The last part Harry heard out loud and looked up to see Fleur and Hermione in the doorway to his bedroom. Each of them moved over to the bed and sat down on either side of him. Hermione took the copy of 'Unfogging the Future' from Harry's hand and sat it aside.

"Take something else." Hermione agreed.

"Can I?"

"I would think so." Hermione said. "You can't be in our year, but you should be able to sit in a third or fourth year class or maybe private tutoring. Dumbledore would surely realize why you would want to give up Divination."

Harry nodded. "I don't want to see her at least not for a class."

"So what would you want to take?" Hermione asked. "Muggle studies would be easy for you even if it's a hundred years behind the times."

Harry looked over at his long time friend and now bondmate. She had the book she had been reading in her lap. 'Advanced Runic Concepts of the Ancients.' He sighed. "No I should be doing more."

What do you think would help me more with what I need to do, Runes or Arithmancy?"

Hermione smiled sadly. "As much as I love hearing you want to better yourself, I'm sorry for why you need to. Last year I'd have given anything to hear you say that but now..." Her voice trailed off as she leaned over and kissed him.

Fleur reached her arms around Harry. "Arithmancy takes years to do anything productive." She said. "Runes is something zat can 'ave a more immediate effect."

"I agree." Hermione said. "I am reading about runes that allow for one thing to imitate another. If you use it with a Protean Charm..." She stopped when she saw the amused look on Harry's face. "What?"

"As I said shortly after we bonded, I have never appreciated you as much as I should have." Harry explained. "You really are brilliant you know. Both of you in fact." Harry said as he took both Fleur and Hermione's hands. He then remembered Fleur's handling of his uncle. "As Ron would say, brilliant but scary, but a good kind of scary."

Hermione blushed but replied. "And you have done as much for me. Shall I mention trolls and werewolves?" She got up and went to her trunk. She returned with one of her books. "Here is my Runes book from last year." She said as she handed it to Harry. "I'll be glad to help you with it and maybe we can get you to a level where you can be in Gabrielle's class next year."

"Thanks." Harry replied.

By the time Harry was ready for bed, he'd finished reading the first two chapters in the book. It wasn't the most exciting book he'd ever read but he hadn't realized how many things depending on runes including his own Firebolt. When he'd read that broom manufacturers used certain industry specific runes along with their own proprietary spells to make brooms fly, he'd rushed into his room and pulled out the Firebolt only to find those runes carved delicately where the ash handle met the birch twigs. He'd only thought they'd been artistic designs before. He never noticed the smile his

bondmates had as they watched him grow more and more interested in the subject.

Finally fatigue set in and he looked over at Hermione. "Are you sleepy love?" He asked.

Hermione's eyes left the book she was reading and found his. It was only a few seconds more before the book was left behind and she made her way to the bedroom to change and prepare for bed.

"I still have trouble believing it sometimes." Hermione said a short time later as she climbed into Harry's bed. There was no hesitation like she had experienced the first time. "I still wake up sometimes expecting this was all a wonderful dream, but then the bond is there..."

"Ever regret it?" Harry asked as he looked into her beautiful eyes as he took her hand in his and brought it up to his lips.

"No." She replied as she intertwined her fingers with his. "But ask me again in fifty or sixty years and I'll let you know if that changes."

"Yes ma'am." He replied as his lips sought hers.

"How are your feet?" Harry asked after a few moments.

"Mmm?" Hermione answered, her mind quite fogged by the intimate nature of them being together in bed and sharing the previous kisses. "Oh...fine." She pulled then from under the covers and reached down to look at the heel where the major blister was located. She ran her finger over the skin that was now smooth with no indications of any injury.

"Did Fleur heal it for you?" Harry asked.

"No..." Hermione responded as she turned her foot one way and then the other to get a better look. The skin was flawless. In fact she noticed that not just the skin, but her toenails were now a perfect length. A thought came to her mind and she instantly raised her hands to look at them. "It...well I think it's the Veela magic." Hermione finally told Harry. "I've always bit my fingernails but look..." She held out her hand for Harry to see. "And my toenails."

"So your hair and now it's healing you too?" Harry asked.

"It appears so." Hermione replied. "I just told Fleur and she says we should send Professor Berceau an owl tomorrow about it."

"Think it's anything to worry about?" Harry asked.

"It's not hurting me and I'm definitely not complaining about my hair or any of this." Hermione replied. "But honestly, I'd feel better if I knew why and to what extent it's going to affect me."

Harry pulled her back into his arms. "Ok, we'll send the owl tomorrow, but for now I'm just glad your feet are better."

"We'll see if they stay that way when we're running again tomorrow."

"Do we really want to meet this Marl person?"

"Mr. Delacour trusts him and he seems to know his stuff."

"Yeah I guess." Harry replied. "It's just... I don't want you or Fleur or Gabrielle hurting because of me."

A flash of hardness appeared in Hermione's eyes as she sat up and stared at Harry. "And how much hurt would we suffer if something happened to you and a few blisters would have prevented it? If this Marl person can make me better in preventing anything from happening to you or Fleur or Gabrielle, then I'll suffer whatever it takes just like you would and so will Fleur and Gabrielle. We are all in this together. We know it and accept it and you better too."

Harry was caught off guard by the resolve in Hermione's voice and could only nod.

"Besides, I am muggleborn and Fleur and Gabrielle are Veela. All of us would be persecuted by the pureblood sentiment that Voldemort believes in." Hermione put her head on Harry's shoulder as she continued in a softer voice. "Even if we weren't bonded with you, we would need something like this to fight back. I think that is what Professor Dumbledore is thinking when he made that offer to Fleur. Even as she teaches others to defend themselves, we can keep practicing what we learn this summer and learn more."

Harry pulled Hermione tighter into his arms. It seemed impossible that he was the one that must kill Voldemort, but he did truly believe the three women he loved were brilliant. If anyone could help him do it, it would be them. He found himself stroking her hair. He let out a sigh. "I just wished..." his voice trailed off as Hermione put a finger on his lips.

"Don't fret about what we can't change." Hermione whispered softly. "You will do it. I know you will and we'll be there helping in whatever way it takes."

"But how?"

Hermione shrugged. "We'll find a way, but I know that you are going to have to believe in yourself as much as we believe in you. Now enough about that, you don't want to spoil my night with you do you?"

"Definitely not." Harry replied with a smile.

"Good." Hermione replied as her hand started running across his chest as she laid her head on his shoulder.

After several minutes of caressing they finally drifted off to sleep with Hermione snuggled into Harry's chest breathing in the smell of the man she loved. A very large smile was upon her lips.

**** E E ****

In a small fenced plot of land on a large estate, a young man sat staring at the headstone of his father. Tears threatened to come through his stoic exterior facade as he continued his vigil. Finally as the light started to fade the young man made a quiet vow to his departed father. With one last glance he turned and walked slowly out of the small family cemetery toward the large Manor House. Behind him the final rays of sunlight seemed to linger on the white marble monument that read.

Lucius Malfoy

Beloved Father and Husband

1954-1995

Inside the Manor home, Narcissa Malfoy sat in her music room drinking a cup of tea as she listened to music that reminded her of years gone by. This was the only room in the large mansion that did not have reminders of her husband. The last week had been very rough as she found out just how loyal her friends were. She and Draco had stood alone while her husband was lowered into the ground. Though several business acquaintances and people she once considered friends were there, none of them offered anything beyond a simply worded condolences and then departed as soon as the dirt was in place over her husband's grave. Since that time no one had been by to check in on her or to offer any support. As she absent-mindedly stirred her tea she thought. "Only when you are in your deepest needs do you find out how shallow you life really is."

Narcissa heard the back door open and soon she saw the blond hair of her son pass by the doorway.

"Draco." she called.

It was several moments before he returned and entered the room. "Yes?" He asked in a cold voice.

"How are you?" She asked softly.

"Fine."

Narcissa tried to engage her son in conversation but he continued to give one word answers. Finally she got to a point she had been thinking of. "I've been thinking that we should move." She started. "This place..."

"No." Draco responded, still in the cold emotionless voice. "This is my father's home and I will not leave it."

"But..."

"I said no mother." Draco's gray eyes still held no emotions. "My father was a great man. I will do what he set out to do. You can go where you wish. I can take care of myself." He turned and left the room without another word.

Narcissa stared as she watched her son leave. She tried to see through the words and figure out what her fifteen year old son meant. She sighed as she brought the tea cup to her lips once more. "He saw only the best of his father. He never saw the grovelling at his master's feet or the wickedness Lucius did when he wanted something. Now I fear Draco will follow his father on the same path that led to the grave Lucius now lies in."

*** E E ****

"Mum!" Ginny complained. Her mother had taken to reading the anti-Veela articles out loud to her family trying to convince them that she was right. "See they say right here that a Veela visiting from..." and "Here's another spot where it says that they..." were heard frequently. Ginny finally stomped up the steps and returned shortly with the book Fleur had given to her.

"Mum, read this." She said as she handed it to her mother.

"What is it?"

"It's the real Veela story." Ginny explained. "Fleur gave it to me."

"And what were you doing around her?" Molly questioned her youngest child.

"Gabrielle is my friend." Ginny replied honestly. "Her sister, Hermione they all are my friends." Ginny took a deep breath to control her temper before she lashed out at her mother. "Mother you have to do something..."

"Of course I do." Molly replied cutting her daughter off. "I'm trying to tell everyone that we need to get Harry away from them."

"NOT that." Ginny exclaimed exasperatedly. "I mean you. I know that Harry is in love with Gabrielle and she...LET ME FINISH.." She cut her mother off when she opened her mouth to speak, "Gabrielle is in love, truly in love with Harry."

"It's just a crush dear." Molly said. "He's much too young..."

"NO!" Ginny yelled as she almost lost her temper again. "Mum, he's not. you might want to keep trying to think he is the same boy that

first came here three years ago but he's not. He's fought Voldemort..."When her mother's eyes went wide, she continued. "Yes VOLDEMORT..Tom Riddle the evil being that possessed me. He's fought him a lot of times now. Mum..I owe Harry my life, but he didn't save me because he loved me, he saved me because it's who he is. Yes I had a crush on the boy-who-lived and I could have fallen for the real Harry Potter very easily, but he has the one he loves."

"Just give it time dear, I'm sure when he comes over he'll see that you're a much better catch." Molly said. "Maybe I can teach you how to make a small love potion like I did when I was a young girl. You remember me telling you about it last year."

Ginny's eyes went wide. "NO!" She exclaimed. "NEVER! Read the book mother, read it or I truly doubt you will ever see Harry in the Burrow again." She turned and stomped out of the kitchen.

Molly looked at the book in her hands. 'Veela, the truth amongst the lies' She sat it down on the kitchen counter and picked back up her Witch Weekly magazine and continued to read the article that she had been reading.

*** July 7th 1995 ***

The next few days flew by for the bondmates. They sent Hedwig off with letters to Professor McGonagall about the possibility of Harry taking up Runes instead of Divination and one to Professor Berceau about Hermione. They continued running and each day it became slightly easier. They were all determined that when they met their instructor face to face they were going to be able to say they did their best.

On Wednesday an owl arrived from Professor McGonagall stating that she'd discuss the switching of subjects with the Headmaster when she got a chance and follow up later in the summer. She explained that it would give him time to see if he could make enough progress to proceed to the fourth year class.

It was also on Wednesday that Dudley tried to get back at Harry. He'd been watching the freaks run every day and the last two had shown a pattern even his small brain could see. The two older girls always ran ahead slightly while Harry hung back and ran slower with the younger blond girl.

"If I can get Harry away from the older one who can do magic.." He thought. "I'll show that young bird how a real man fights." Visions of him standing over the bloodied body of his cousin brought a smile to his piggish face as he watched the freaks once again walk toward the road in preparation for their run. He laced up his trainers and started on a leisurely pace toward the alleyway on Magnolia Crescent. They always passed through there along their route and it was far enough along that the two older girls would already be ahead.

Dudley waited and as expected, Fleur and Hermione came out of the alleyway first. He was standing behind a hedge and neither saw him. He quickly ducked into the alley and saw his cousin and the other girl running toward him. He stood in the middle of the alley with his arms crossed and waited.

Harry and Gabrielle stopped short of Dudley expecting something was up. A quick mental shout to Fleur and Hermione brought them to a halt and they started back.

"Don't let him see you yet." Harry told them. He then spoke to his cousin. "Move Dudley."

Dudley grinned maliciously. "You've got no one to protect you now."

"Going to crap in your pants again?" Harry asked. "What did good old Aunt Petunia say to that?"

"Shut up Freak." Dudley snarled. "I know that freak girl did something."

"Zat's my sister." Gabrielle said angrily. "She was only protecting 'Arry."

"Well you freak sister isn't here is she?" Dudley replied smirking. "And now I'm going to show you what a real man can do."

"Ze only man in zis alley is 'Arry." Gabrielle replied. "You're nothing but a fat pig. If you lay a finger on my bondmate, if 'e's too good to 'urt you, my sisters and I will."

"Big words from such a small girl." Dudley replied. "Maybe once I take care of him.." He pointed at Harry, "you and I can go somewhere."

"If you think you can hurt me Dudley go ahead and try." Harry replied calmly as he stepped in front of Gabrielle. "I didn't have a wand last year when Aunt Marge floated away did I? What about the zoo and the snake? Did you know I can talk to them...snakes I mean? Want me to tell one that your bed would be a nice warm place to sleep? Now are you really sure you want to make me angry?"

All of sudden Dudley didn't feel so confident as he thought about a snake in his bed. His chest deflated a bit as he swallowed nervously.

"Let's go Gabi." Harry said and started to guide her past his cousin. Years of being a seeker left Harry with excellent peripheral vision even with his glasses. He noticed the shift of his cousin's weight and without thinking he reacted. He pushed Gabrielle away and ducked Dudley's massive fist all in one motion.

The problem that Dudley faced was he expected his fist to land on his opponent. In the weight class Dudley boxed in, he and his opponent always stood and basically traded blows. He'd never fought anyone with Harry's reflexes. He'd put his entire weight into that punch and when he missed, he was completely off balance. The next thing he saw was Harry's return fist which shocked him completely. In a moment of complete clarity Dudley realized the reason Harry never fought back before was because of his father who would have beat Harry senseless, but now that threat was gone. When Harry's first connected with his nose, Dudley also realized his cousin was much stronger than he looked.

Blood poured out of his nose as he fell to one knee. He looked up at his cousin who stood over him with a very defiant look on his face.

"Dudley, I'm not the same kid you use to beat up regularly." Harry stated flatly. "I don't need Fleur to do magic to beat you."

Dudley scrambled to his feet and raised his fists. "You're nuttin but a freak." He sputtered through the blood running down his face. "You and those bints of yours."

Twenty seconds later Dudley was on the ground again this time with at least two teeth loose.

"You ever insult any of these ladies again and you will be crawling home." Harry said angrily. He had a bruise on his shoulder where Dudley's fist had made contact in the last exchange of blows but he shrugged it off.

Harry and Gabrielle left Dudley lying in the alleyway as they met up with Fleur and Hermione who were waiting at the other end.

"You could 'ave let me deal with 'im." Fleur said.

"He's had that coming for years." Harry replied with a sigh as the adrenaline from the fight left him. "He won't be able to say it was because I did magic."

"Zink 'e'll leave us alone now?"

"If he doesn't, you can turn him into a pig."

Fleur looked back at the alleyway, almost wishing Dudley would trying something one more time.

Harry expected it the rest of the day, so he wasn't surprised when he heard his uncle come out the back door that evening yelling for him.

"OUT!" His uncle yelled as soon as Harry and Fleur left the tent. Petunia was standing next to him. "I WANT YOU AND YOUR...YOUR FRIENDS OUT! USING YOUR FREAKISHNESS TO HURT MY SON IS THE END!"

"That's what Dudley told you?" Harry asked. "He won't admit that I beat him without magic?"

"You did no such thing you...you FREAK!" Vernon roared. "Dudley told me all about being held down by her freakishness," He pointed a fat finger at Fleur, "and you hitting him."

Harry sighed. "That's not how it happened, but I really have no reason to argue the point with you. We'll leave Saturday. I need to stay in England until then because of the trial of the man who

betrayed my parents." Harry couldn't help but notice a questioning look on Petunia's face. "You should hope he suffers as well since it's because of him that I ended up on your doorstep."

"Saturday then." Vernon agreed gruffly as he turned and stomped off.

Petunia Dursley hesitated and before she turned to follow her husband, Harry said. "Aunt Petunia, I'm sorry that you were jealous of mum and Severus, but I'm not sure why you took that jealousy out on me."

Petunia froze and her eyes widened. "How..." she quickly regained her composure. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"So if I ask Professor Dumbledore he won't remember a letter that Petunia Evans wrote him?" Harry asked.

Petunia stared at her nephew for several seconds and then turned and walked quickly into the house without making another sound.

*** E E ****

It had been a tiring day for Arthur Weasley. He'd spent the last nine hours tracking down a wizard who thought it was funny to go around putting notice me not charms on muggle automobiles. Muggles were wandering around parking lots for hours searching for cars that were right where they had been parked. He was about to get up and leave when he heard a knock at his door. Looking up he found his son Percy standing there looking tired and haggard. Arthur knew it's been a grueling couple of weeks for the young man. An investigation had been opened into Percy's doings when Crouch Jr. had confessed to his father being Imperiused by Voldemort and had been sending Percy instructions. The investigation had concluded with a official reprimand being placed in his file.

"Hello Perce." Arthur said. "You look tired."

Percy only nodded as he entered his father's office. He slumped into Perkins' chair which was currently vacant. He said nothing for a few seconds before finally starting. "Father, do you know if anything important is happening this Friday?"

Arthur looked at his calendar. "Only Pettigrew's trial, why?"

"Umbridge." Percy replied. "She's..." Percy stopped for a few seconds before continuing. "You know she was put in charge of my department?"

"Of course." Arthur replied.

"I've tried to get along with her." Percy said. "But something isn't right."

"What do you mean?"

"Ever since she took over she's been..." Percy again hesitated, "in a foul temper. Like she doesn't want the job. She's been putting more and more on me. I thought it was punishment for what I did but something changed..."

"What did?" Arthur asked. He knew working with Umbridge couldn't be easy and if his son needed to vent, he'd be glad to listen.

"Like I said she's been in a foul mood ever since she took over, but two days ago she started acting happier."

"What's wrong with that and what does it have to do with Friday?"

"She circled that day on her calendar and now she seems to always be looking at it. I get the impression that whatever is suppose to happen Friday is what's making her happy. When I asked her about it, she snapped at me like I'd done something wrong. She said it was none of my concern." Percy explained. "I..I was just trying to make sure I hadn't missed something. I can't help but wonder if she's planning on firing me."

In the cramped office that Arthur had, Percy was only a foot away from him. He put his hand on his son's shoulder. "You've already been disciplined for what you did so nothing else should happen based on that. You keep doing your best and I'll see if I can find out anything."

Percy tired eyes perked up a little as he nodded at his father. "Thank you."

"Now," Mr. Weasley said, "let's go see what your mother has planned for dinner."

"I can't." Percy replied. "Umbridge wants me to find out if the Minister is planning on Harry Potter sitting somewhere special at Pettigrew's trial."

"What is it to her?" Arthur asked. "Doesn't sound like something Magical Cooperation should be concerned with."

"She said it's because the Deputy Minister of France will probably be with him and wants to make sure he's comfortable and if we need to provide for his security or will he have his own." Percy stood. "I mentioned to her that security would be a concern for the DMLE but she turned nasty and told me to do what she instructed me to do."

"Hmm..." Arthur started. "I agree that it's an LE issue, but you better do what she says. I'll make sure we save some for food for you."

"Thanks Father."

Arthur watched his son leave his office. He shook his head knowing what it must be like to work for Dolores Umbridge. He'd cross paths with her a few times and he found her very vindictive and petty. "I'll see if I can help him by running the security thing past Amelia." That forced his thoughts toward Harry and of course that led to Molly and her issues with Veela.

"The only person I've ever know to dislike Veela more is Umbri..." Arthur suddenly stopped as he thought of his son. then he shook his head. "Now I'm becoming paranoid." He thought. He never could quite shake the feeling of uneasiness that had settled in his stomach though.

*** July 9th 1996****

Friday morning came quickly for the bondmates. They hadn't been bothered by Vernon or Dudley the last two days. They had seen Dudley with his friends smoking near the playpark on a couple of occasions, but he always made sure he was looking the other way when they came around. They had even caught him breaking the swings and the roundabout to try and prevent Harry from enjoying himself with the ladies. They had smiled when they noticed Dudley

seemed angry when he'd looked back only to find the swings repaired by magic and the girls swinging happily on them. On occasion Harry had caught his Aunt staring out at the tent from the kitchen window. They were just walking out of the back garden to go for the morning run when a familiar face appeared. A middle aged but greying man and his large black dog walked into the driveway.

"Moony!" Harry yelled. "Padfoot." He rushed to greet them. Padfoot started bounding around him happily.

"Down boy." Remus said to the dog. "Bad doggie."

The dog turned and looked at Remus with a cocked head.

"And don't you even think about peeing on me." Moony said. He turned to Harry. "We're here to escort you to the Ministry, but for now, do you think we could go to your tent?"

"Sure, but the trial isn't until three right?"

"Right, but we thought we'd stop somewhere else first." Moony replied mysteriously as he winked at the dog.

As they turned and started back toward the tent, Harry remembered what he needed to tell someone. "Oh, Hedwig isn't back yet and I didn't want to use Dobby as a messenger, we need to leave tomorrow. Dudley and I got into a row when he tried to ambush me and Gabrielle."

"Alain will be at the Ministry and I'm sure he can make the arrangements though I'm not sure how Dumbledore will take it." Moony replied. "Been that bad?"

"Zose idiots 'ave been after 'Arry ever since we've been 'ere." Fleur replied as they arrived at the tent. Upon entering Sirius immediately transformed out of his dog animagus form.

"How are you pup?" He asked his godson. "Want me to go hex the Dursleys for you?"

"No, I just want to get out of here." Harry replied truthfully. "If the wards fall, I truly don't care. I did my best. I didn't use magic when I took on Dudley but he went spouted lies of course." He then realized

Sirius was back. "What are you doing back in town? Have they cleared you?"

"Not quite, but Dumbledore is going to push it as soon as Pettigrew is convicted." Harry's godfather replied. "But Dumbledore needed a place for the Order to have a Headquarters and I offered my old home. I had to come back to get him inside the wards."

"Where is it?"

"I can't tell you." Sirius replied with a grin. "Not until Dumbledore tells you anyway."

"It's under a Fidelius?" Hermione asked with her eyes open wide.

"Right in one." Sirius replied. "Maybe we'll get a chance to stop by there before you head to France. Molly, Arthur and their gang are taking up residence there this weekend."

"Ginny too?" Gabrielle asked hopefully.

"Yep, all the redheads are planning on being there except Bill who's got his own place."

"I'm not sure I'm ready to see Mrs. Weasley yet." Harry commented. "But I'd like to see your place."

"Then we shall make it happen."

"What's been going on with Voldemort?" Harry asked. "I thought he'd have tried something by now but nothing has been reported in the Daily Prophet."

"He's laying low it seems." Remus replied. "The Ministry is watching the known Death Eaters and they are getting arrested if they even spit on the wrong side of the street. Based on the information that Macnair gave, the German Aurors were able to prevent a couple of Death Eaters from recruiting the giants, though Dumbledore is positive Voldemort will try again."

"I guess it's to be expected." Hermione said. "Voldemort thinks he's immortal. Why would he rush things? If he were to start an all out

war before he's ready, he risks the entire magical society rising against him."

"I zink 'e definitely is zat type of person." Fleur added "E spent a year trying to get to ze philosopher's stone and another year trying to get 'Arry to a graveyard. Eet seems 'e acts with methodical long range plans."

"Exactly." Sirius said. He then looked at Remus, "Shall we give Harry his early birthday present? It was your idea."

"I think so." Moony replied. He looked around at the group of young people with Harry at the center. "We just need to get out of the Anti-apparition wards..."

"Are there portkey prevention wards as well?" Harry asked suddenly as he remembered Marl's letter.

Remus shrugged. "Definitely. About every type of wards available is erected around this place."

"Told you Dumbledore wouldn't miss those." Hermione said.

"What?" Remus asked.

"Oh, the question came up whether we had anti-portkey wards or not the other day."

"Is there a way to detect them?" Harry asked. "To know what wards are up?"

"Of course." Remus replied. "How else could you tell if you put up the wards correctly?"

"Could you show me how to do it?"

"You need to learn the basis of wards first." Remus replied. "It doesn't do any good to see and not understand what you are seeing."

"But if I can detect it, couldn't Fleur interpret it for me?" Harry asked. "At least until I can catch up to that point?"

Remus nodded. "That's a good point. I keep forgetting about that ability of yours." He turned to Fleur. "Do you know how to detect wards?"

"Just some of ze basic ones." Fleur replied. "I only know how to detect what I can put up, mostly muggle repelling and such."

"I read a book on detecting them, but I've never tried to." Hermione added.

"All of you should work on ward creation both rune based and spell based." Remus stated in the same voice he used to use in class. "Being able to put up wards, even if they are just warning wards could help you immensely. But yes." He said to Harry. "I'll try to find time this summer to show you how to detect them."

Fleur and Hermione were already looking at each other. Harry knew that they were already deciding where they would start.

A few minutes later in a deserted alleyway Sirius transformed back to his human form. "Fleur do you know how to apparate?"

"I 'ad ze training class last year, but never tested since I turned seventeen so close to school starting and zen ze trip to 'ogwarts."

"You know what to expect then. Hermione you side apparated when we went to the staging area before the graveyard."

Hermione nodded as she remembered the experience. The feeling of being compressed into a narrow passage wasn't one she enjoyed.

"Gabrielle..."

"My Papa has taken me places before where zere were no floos." Gabrielle replied. "I know what to expect."

"That leaves you Harry." Sirius said. "I'll take you and Gabrielle, while Moony can take Hermione and Fleur."

"Where?"

"Bad as James." Moony said. "He never could stand being surprised."

"You'll find out very shortly." Sirius told his godson. "It is your birthday present from us."

After grabbing the appropriate arms they turned and disappeared. When they appeared again they found themselves in a secluded area of a small town. Ahead of them was a small narrow road lined with cottages.

"Welcome to Godric's Hollow Harry." Sirius said softly.

"This...this is where I was born?" Harry asked as he realized the gift he was being given.

"Yes. We'll be walking there soon." Remus said.

"Isn't it dangerous?" Fleur asked. "Wouldn't Voldemort surely expect 'Arry to come 'ere?"

"Maybe but we took care of that. Though you won't see them, almost every member of the Order is around right now." Sirius replied. "We've been sweeping the village all morning to make sure no Death Eaters were around." He put his arm around his godson. "With Peter's trial this afternoon we thought it would be a good day for you to put your past behind you and start your new future."

Harry looked up at his godfather with tears in his eyes. He was afraid to speak because he knew his voice would crack so he just nodded.

"Remus will be guiding you." Sirius said. "And oh, Dumbledore planned a gift for Hermione as well. You'll find out about that later."

Hermione was already moving to give Harry and hug when she looked at Sirius. "What kind of gift?"

"You'll find out." Remus answered her as Sirius was already shifting to his animagus form. Though once he was a dog he started wagging his tail vigorously.

Remus led them out onto the lane. The warm July sun was countered by the shade of the large trees lining the street. As they walked, they passed cottages with children out playing in the

gardens while parents tended to the lawns. A young lady was digging in the soil around her rose bushes while a young toddler sat beside her digging dirt on its own with pudgy little fingers. Harry instantly liked the place. It was nothing like Privet Drive. Here there was a sense of calm and peacefulness, of happiness and friendliness. They had been walking a little while when it turned to the left and they found themselves in the heart of the village. A small square with a war memorial could be seen along with stores and shops. A Post Office and a church could also be seen. Doors to the shops were standing open and people were walking between them doing their daily shopping.

"This way." Remus said and guided them into the square and toward the obelisk shaped war memorial. As they neared it, it transformed before their eyes. Instead of what had been there, they now could see a statute of a man, a woman and their child. The man had untidy hair and glasses, while the woman had long hair and a kind pretty face. In her arms was a small baby boy.

"Why?" Harry asked as he ran his fingers over the cold stone of his own baby forehead that didn't have a scar upon it.

Remus shrugged. "You and your family represent something special to the people here and everywhere. It was the end of the darkness."

Harry nodded as he stared at his parents.

They'd only been there a short time when another family walked up. It was a middle aged man and woman who was probably his wife and two teen-aged kids. "Lost someone too?" The woman asked.

"Pardon?" Harry responded.

"In a war?" The lady nodded at the statue which Harry remembered was something different to the muggles.

"Yes." He replied. "My..."

"His Father died in the Falkland war." Remus spoke up.

The muggle lady nodded. "Arthur." she nodded at her husband. "Lost his brother in the Gulf a few years back."

"I'm sorry for your loss sir." Remus said.

The man just nodded.

"I wish you a good day." Remus said to the woman and guided the group away. When they were far enough away he said. "I'm sorry for cutting you off, but if you had mentioned your parents as being lost, it might have brought up more questions."

"I understand." Harry replied. "Thanks."

"How are you feeling?" Remus asked.

"I'm fine." Harry replied. Gabrielle was walking on one side of Harry while Hermione was on the other.

"I thought you'd like to visit your parents next." Remus said as he nodded over toward the church they had seen earlier. Behind it was a graveyard surrounded by a fence.

Harry stopped as he looked at the fence. He could feel the love from his bondmates. Their concern was also there. He remembered meeting his parents after he had died; then the Dementor induced memories came to mind. He finally nodded as he steeled himself and started walking again.

They entered the small gate that led into the graveyard and again Harry stopped as he stared at the rows of tombstones. There were several other people and families there already visiting their dead relatives and friends.

Remus with Padfoot by his side walked off toward a specific area leaving Harry alone with his ladies. Finally Harry followed a path toward them. As with all people who enter a graveyard, Harry's eyes followed the words on the tombstones as he walked along. He stopped when he saw a familiar name. 'Dumbledore'. He looked closer and saw the name 'Kendra Dumbledore' and her daughter 'Ariana'.

"I wonder if they're related to Professor Dumbledore?" Harry asked as he pointed at the tombstone.

"I don't know." Hermione answered. "But she'd have died when Dumbledore was fairly young."

They continued on following Remus who had stopped only a couple of rows away. They saw him glance back at them before he turned back and knelt at the tombstones he was in front of. When they arrived by his side they saw Sirius was lying beside the graveyard. Fleur took Harry's hand as he looked down at the white marble marker and read

JAMES POTTER

BORN 27 MARCH 1960
DIED 31 OCTOBER 1981

and beside his father's name he read.

LILY POTTER

BORN 30 JANUARY 1960
DIED 31 OCTOBER 1981

Below both of their names was a final engraving and it read.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Harry was surprised that the graves didn't bring the sadness he had expected. But it was only a few seconds until he realized that he knew his parents weren't in the graves in front of him. Only the bodies that died that day were there. He still knelt before his parents' grave. He wasn't surprised when all of his bondmates surrounded him, while Hermione who had been through the most with him, knelt by his side. He turned to look at her and smiled. He took her hand before speaking to his parents who he knew were watching him.

"Mum, Dad, I love you." Harry started. "I wish you were here but I know I will see you again someday. I've always wanted my own family and now as you know I have one. I just wished you were here to be a part of it also." He looked at the three young women he loved who he considered to be his family. In that moment Harry decided Remus was right, this was a time to put the past to rest and start his future. There was only one thing to do to make his future official. To truly make these ladies his family. He turned back to his

parents' grave. "I know you're watching so now I want to turn this moment into something a little more special." Still on his knee he turned so he could see all of his bondmates. "Fleur, Hermione, Gabrielle, I want to do something. I guess it should be more romantic than in a graveyard, but I truly want to start my family here in front of my parents." He looked into Fleur's eyes. "Fleur Delacour, I don't deserve you, but I know that I love you and truly glad you love me too. The bond you and your sister bestowed upon me changed my life, making it so much better. Here in front of my parents and the two people who would be the closest thing I have to my old family, I ask will you be my wife and become part of my new family."

Fleur looked at Harry. It was evident in the happiness that poured into him from his eldest bondmate that she didn't think a graveyard was inappropriate. "With all of my 'eart I want nothing more zan zat. I want to be your wife and your family."

Harry smiled at Fleur and then turned to Gabrielle. "Gabrielle Delacour, I don't deserve you but I do truly love you and will forever be glad of the love you give me. Will you marry me and become my wife and my family?"

Gabrielle was nodding before the words were even spoken. "Oui I will." She said as her blue eyes filled with tears of happiness.

Harry then turned to Hermione who still was kneeling beside him. She had a smile but waited for the question. "Mione, Last but definitely not least. I don't know when I fell in love with you, but I know that I truly do. I'm not sure why you ever fell in love with me but I will forever be thankful for it and for you joining the bond we share. You've been my best friend and the one person who has always been by side for the last four years, will you marry me and stay with me for the rest of our lives? Will you be my family."

"Four years ago you came to rescue me when no one else cared." Hermione replied. She stopped him from speaking for a second. "I know you will say Ron was with you, but you and I know he was there because of you not me. I don't know when the friendship that developed from that night turned to love, but I know it did. I can't imagine a day without you, nor do I want to. Of course I'll marry you."

"I will get you rings when we get a chance...maybe in France?" Harry said apologetically as he got off his knees. "Maybe I should have waited...but it felt right."

Fleur wrapped her arms around Harry and kissed him before saying. "I zink I can tell you zat we all zought it was perfect. We know it came from your 'eart."

Gabrielle and Hermione also gave Harry a kiss while Sirius was barking around them. After a while Remus cleared his throat.

"We have a couple of more stops before we get you to the Ministry.

Harry had almost forgot the importance of the afternoon and Pettigrew. He nodded to Remus who led them out of the graveyard. Harry gave one last look at the white marble headstone before he followed his future wives. When they left the church behind they walked out of the village square in the opposite direction than they came. Harry noticed a flash of pink hair as a young lady walked around a corner ahead of them. Something about her seemed familiar. He'd seen her before.

"That lady who just walked around that corner." He started as he pointed to where he had seen her. "I've seen her before.."

Before he could saying anything else they heard a crash from the same area and a female voice cursing.

"Would she happened to have had pink hair?" Remus asked nonchalantly.

"Yeah."

"That would be Tonks." Remus explained. "She's a member of the Order."

"She's an Auror too isn't she?" Hermione asked. "She was with Madam Bones that night."

"She was around that night." Remus concurred. As he finished speaking a little old lady came from the same corner limping.

"Hello Tonks." Remus said as the lady passed them. "What did you stumble over?"

Harry just looked confused. "But you said Tonks was the one with pink hair."

"Harry Potter meet..uh Tonks. Tonks this of course who you've been protecting all day Harry, Fleur, Gabrielle and Hermione." He smiled at Harry. "I would mention her first name but she'd hex me." Remus said. "by the way she's Sirius's cousin."

"But...who was the pink haired woman then?"

The old lady grinned a grin that defied the aged look of her face. "Well guv'nor." She said in a old voice. "Maybe you'll find out someday." Then she kept going past them.

Remus had an amused look on his face as he watched the old lady limp away but refused to say anything further.

They continued down the lane until the cottages started to thin out. At the end of a particular row of houses near the edge of town they could see a cottage sitting amongst overgrown waist high grass surrounded by a hedge that hadn't been kept in a while. Harry knew from the damaged top floor where he was. This is where it had happened, this is where his mother and father died. He'd been expecting that was where they were headed but to be physically standing in front of the rusted gate and peering at the house left a lump in his throat. As he looked through the bars of the gate and visualized the green flash that must have happened in the window where the damage was located.

"My old room." He thought.

Hermione and Gabrielle came to Harry's side while Fleur reached her arms around him. "We are 'ere for you my 'usband." Fleur said softly. "You are not alone, and never will be again."

Harry swallowed and then nodded. His hand reached out for the rusted gate and as it touched it, a wooden sign rose out of the ground. Gold letters were written on it.

On this spot, on this night of 31 October 1981,

Lily and James Potter lost their lives.
Their son, Harry, remains the only wizard
ever to have survived the Killing Curse.
This house, invisible to Muggles, has been left
in its ruined state as a monument to the Potters
and as a reminder of the violence
that tore apart their family.

All around the words were written and carved initials along with
messages from the people who had come to see the place the Boy
Who Lived had survived. In very new everlasting ink someone had
recently written the word TWICE next to 'Killing Curse'.

"They shouldn't have written on that sign." Hermione said. "It's..."

"I like it." Harry said as he traced someone's initials. "I think it's
brilliant." He took Hermione's hand and explained. "This isn't the
Ministry or some statue, this is real people who come to pay their
respects to my parents. They weren't trying to deface the sign..."

"If you're sure." Hermione said. "It's your house."

Harry looked again at the cottage before repeating her words. "My
house." He shook his head. "No, this was my parents' house and I
might own it, but it will never be my house. It belongs to those
people." He nodded to the sign filled with scribbles. "Today was
about leaving the past and starting the future and this is part of that."
He looked at Remus and the large black dog beside him. "Thank
you." He said. "To both of you. This was exactly what I needed."

Remus pulled the young man into a hug. "You're welcome. Now I
think we promised one last gift for one of your betrothed."

"This is Harry's day." Hermione said. "I don't need anything."

Remus looked at Padfoot and shrugged. "And to think we were
going to introduce her to Bathilda Bagshot. Albus was positive she'd
want to meet..."

"THE BATHILDA BAGSHOT!" Hermione exclaimed. "the one who
wrote a History of Magic?"

Remus put a finger to his chin and pretended to think. "Yes, I do believe they are the one and the same."

"Why didn't you mention it earlier?" Hermione complained. "I would have dressed better...and...and...I could have brought my copy of my book. Do you think she'd sign it later?"

"Relax." Remus replied. "She is a very good friend of Albus and I'm sure she'd be glad to sign a book for you."

"And you are dressed just fine." Harry added. "Very beautiful."

Hermione smiled at her boyfriend. "Thank you." She said but it was obvious from the way her eyes were trying to encourage Remus to start walking that she wanted to meet Bathilda Bagshot.

Remus smirked to his canine companion. "I think she'd like that present after all."

The black dog rolled over on his back and pretended to be dead.

"I agree, I think the delay is killing her now." Remus said. He turned to the group. "We need to go this way." He started off down the street back the way they had came. "We'll be using her floo to get to the Ministry. It was convenient to how close it was to here." He'd only walked past several houses when he turned into a small gate.

"Bathilda Bagshot lived this close to the Potters?" Hermione asked as she looked back down the lane and could easily see the gate to the Potters' cottage.

Remus nodded. "A lot of witches and wizards live or have lived here." He replied. "You know of course that it's named after Godric Gryffindor himself. He was born here over a thousand years ago."

A thought of a ruby hilted sword flashed through Harry's mind as he heard the name.

Remus knocked on the door and it was opened by the pink haired Auror.

"Wotcher Remus." She said.

"Got here while we were down the lane?" Remus asked.

"The Order is mostly gone now." Tonks replied. "Just a few of us left and we'll follow you out as you go."

"Bathilda in her study?"

"I'll show you the way." Tonks said and turned and limped ahead of them.

Fleur studied the Auror's limp as they followed her and finally realized. "Zat was you? You're Tonks."

As Tonks turned she changed appearances and before them stood the ancient old lady they had met earlier. Each of the four young people instantly reached for their wands.

"Easy." Remus said. "Tonks, you are going to get hexed like that."

"Oh, stealing my fun." Tonks complained as she shifted back into her pink haired appearance.

"You're...you're a metamorphmagus?" Hermione asked in surprise.

"Very good."

"Is that like an animagus?" Harry asked.

"No, not really. I can change my appearance and look like other people."

"Brilliant." Harry replied.

"Well guv'nor I heard you can do some pretty brilliant things with your wand." She said with a wink giving the double meaning.

Harry was about reply but then he felt a flash of annoyance from Fleur and Hermione who both moved between him and Tonks. Only then did he realize what Tonks had meant. He blushed profusely.

"Tonks, no teasing Harry like that or you might end up on the wrong end of three wands."

"Three?" She asked questioningly. "That was sort of what caused me to say it, I mean I read he was dating her," She nodded at Gabrielle, "but I saw him kissing all of them."

Sirius who had morphed into his self a minute earlier spoke up. "You can trust her Harry if you want to tell her. She is my cousin."

"Tonks, I would like you to meet Hermione Granger, Gabrielle Delacour and Fleur Delacour, all are my betrothed." Harry said and enjoyed the sputtering that Tonks did.

"Ok I deserved the joke." Tonks finally admitted as she calmed down.

"He's not joking." Hermione said.

"We are all to be his wives."

"While Tonks is working that out, why don't you follow me to see Bathilda." Remus said and they walked past Tonks who had a questioning look on her face.

As Sirius walked past he whispered. "On Black honor it's true. Those three young women are all engaged to him. In fact what you saw in the graveyard was him proposing." That only made Tonks stare at the teens walking away even harder as her mouth continued to try to speak but no words came out. "They all said yes as well." Sirius said as he walked after his godson.

"So which of you is Miss Granger again?" The stooped old lady with only a few shafts of silvery hair on her head and eyes thick with cataracts asked as Remus introduced the bondmates to the ancient Magical Historian.

"That would be me Ma'am." Hermione answered nervously. "I'm very glad to meet you."

"Yes, Albus said you were his brightest student." Bathilda said. "That you're even able to find Cuthbert interesting."

"Cuthbert?" Hermione questioned.

"To you he would be Professor Binns." The ancient witch replied with what might have been a smile lost in the wrinkles. "It does an

old witch like myself good to know that her work is appreciated. So many students today don't understand the importance of history."

"We usually find our futures written in the pages of History." Hermione said.

Bathilda moved her head in a slight nod. "Reminds me of Dumbledore when he was your age."

"You knew Dumbledore when he was my age?" Hermione asked.

"Of course, his family lived nearby." Bathilda said. "Tragic what happened to his mother and sister."

The wording on a tombstone came to Harry's mind. "Dumbledore, and a mother and daughter." But he decided it wasn't the time to ask questions.

The old witch was peering through her cataracts as she studied the young witch that Dumbledore had spoken so highly of. She finally rose from her chair and walked slowly over to an old cabinet. She opened it and reached inside and pulled out a large book. she turned and slowly walked back until she was standing in front of Hermione.

"Take this dear." She said as she handed the book to the young witch. "It's the very first copy of the History of Magic ever printed. I was quite proud of it."

Hermione's eyes widened as she looked at the book in reverence. Almost afraid to breath on it. "I..I can't. It's too valuable."

"Which is why I want you to have it." Bathilda explained. "I know I'm not long for this world. I can no longer read it and I feel you will treasure it for what it stands for and not for what it's worth."

Hermione looked at the Historian and Authoress and nodded. "Thank you." She finally squeaked out. "I'll treasure it always."

"I'm sure you will."

They spent lunch with the Historian who regaled them of tales from history that were never put down in her book. Then she told Harry of

her friendship with his parents. Finally Remus pointed out that it was two and they needed to get a move on. After paying their respects to Bathilda they prepared to leave.

"I just wished my nephew Gellert had believed in history." She said with a sigh. "Take care and if you ever wish to spend time with an old woman, I'd always enjoy your company."

Remus guided them to the fireplace and showed them the floo power. A few minutes later they were all standing in a very large Atrium.

A/N. I see Percy not falling off the deep end in this story. Without the Minister wanting him to spy on his family and Dumbledore, I don't think the split would have happened between him and his family.

Chapter 37

"Arthur." Amelia Bones said as she walked up to the balding red haired man. "I'm sorry I didn't get back to you earlier, but I've been busy checking into something very serious and it concerns your son."

"What do you mean?"

"You said your son Percy," Bones started "said that Dolores wanted him to check on security for the Deputy Minister of France right?"

"Yes, well more of him in conjunction with Harry Potter." Arthur replied. "And I appreciate you helping me get the information for him."

"That's a problem." Amelia said. "I asked Dolores and she denied ever asking Percy to make any inquiries."

"Ma'am, Percy wouldn't lie about something like that."

"But.." Amelia sighed. "Look Arthur, your son made some large leaps in assuming authority last year and now he's again saying his boss is telling him to do things that she's denying. " She shrugged. "I have your son making security inquiries about Harry Potter and a visiting official and no reason for it."

"What are you suggesting?" Arthur asked suddenly wary.

"I can't risk Percy being a threat in the proceedings today." Amelia replied sternly. "Arthur, you're a good man and I know you have a good family, but it's not a risk I can take, especially...especially after last year. In some way your son might hold Mr. Potter responsible for what happened."

"He doesn..."Arthur stopped when he realized how circumstances must look to Amelia. He sighed as he nodded his head slightly in understanding before saying, "of course. Can I explain it to him?"

"Yes, but if he's seen in the Ministry after two thirty, he will be detained."

"May I ask one other question?"

"Of course Arthur." Amelia replied.

"What if it's the other way around?" Arthur asked.

"What do you mean?"

"What if Dolores used my son to get the information for some reason." Arthur asked. "Knowing that if it was questioned, he'd be the one under suspicion."

Amelia Bones looked thoughtful for a few seconds. "It is possible but why would she?"

"You know how much Dolores does not like.." Arthur paused as he searched for a word.

"I'll save you the trouble of trying to find a delicate way to say what you want to say and agree already." Bones said.

"You do know that Minister Delacour's wife and daughters are part Veela? And that Harry himself is dating one of those daughters?"

Amelia Bones again had a thoughtful look upon her face for a few seconds, though to herself she muttered "both of his daughters you mean." She finally looked back to Arthur. "It wouldn't hurt to be prudent and keep an eye on all problem possibilities, but I can't keep Dolores out of the proceedings based on a possibility."

"Thank you for at least considering it though." Arthur said.

"I'm just doing my job. Remember to make sure Percy goes home." Amelia turned to leave and an idea came to mind. "Wait." She said as she turned back to Mr. Weasley. "Do you really believe your son Arthur?"

Arthur responded without hesitation. "Yes I do. Though I know I am biased in this matter, I know my son is a good man Amelia. He can be a bit pompous and sometimes he might not think for himself to well, but he's not a liar."

Amelia could see the honesty in Arthur Weasley's eyes. She nodded. "Bring him by my office then, say in a half hour?"

Arthur's brow furrowed in question but he knew Amelia Bones was a fair person. "Of course." He replied and left to find Percy.

***** E E *****

Harry stared at the large Atrium that he stood in with his mouth open. They were standing in the middle of a long, majestic hall with a dark polished wood floor and a peacock blue ceiling that had inlaid golden symbols that kept changing. All along each side of the hall were ornate fireplaces just like the one they had just come out of. Very near them was a fountain. In the middle of the fountain a group of golden statues caught his attention. He could see they depicted a wizard, a witch, a centaur, a goblin, and a house-elf, all spouting water into the fountain. At one end of the long hall was a set of golden gates. As he stared at the Atrium a fireplace flared and what appeared to be a Ministry employee came out and walked toward gates.

Harry looked around. "What about Sir...I mean Padfoot?"

"He's staying at Bathilda's cottage for now." Remus replied. "If he's need to testify for some reason, we can get to him pretty quickly, but until the Ministry has officially cleared him he'll stay away."

Harry then walked over to the fountain and noticed that the bottom had silver Sickles and bronze Knuts scattered on it's bottom. There was a small sign that read.

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF MAGICAL BRETHREN WILL BE GIVEN TO ST MUNGO'S HOSPITAL FOR MAGICAL MALADIES AND INJURIES.

Thinking of his godfather, Harry reached into his pouch and pulled out a golden Galleon and tossed it into the fountain. "For luck." He said as he turned back to the others.

"There are rooms over there to change into robes." Remus said as he pointed to a little hallway. Fleur pulled out the shrunken bag that held their robes and she started to pass them to everyone who then disappeared into the changing rooms.

When they came out of the changing area, there were four blue cloaked Aurors waiting. One of them was Tonks with her pink hair clearly visible. Beside her was a large black gentleman who was bald and wore a single gold earring that glinted in the torchlight. Beside him was a straight brown haired gentleman and finally a brownish blond haired woman with an eye patch over her left eye who came across to Harry as someone that he didn't want to mess with.

"We'll be escorting you down." The man with the earring said in a deep voice as he looked at Harry. "In case this gentleman didn't mention me, my name is Kingsley Shacklebolt. I understand you've met Nymphadora Tonks..."

"Shack..." Tonks growled.

"Calm down Tonks, unless you want 'doesn't play well with others' on your next performance report." Shacklebolt joked before turning back to Harry. "I hope Remus warned you that she doesn't like her first name, I'd hate to lose you while we're guarding you." He flashed a brilliant white smile at his own humor. "Now this is William Williamson," He nodded toward the brown haired gentleman, "and this lovely lady is Sonja Dervens."

"I'll lovely you Kingsley." Sonja snarled.

"Aren't we safe here?" Harry asked. "Do we need guards at the Ministry?"

"Harry, right now you aren't safe anywhere." Remus said. "Going down to the courtroom and while we're there you're going to be in close contact with plenty of witches and wizards. We still don't know who all the bad guys are and would prefer not to take chances."

"Fine." Harry replied.

"Now if you'll walk between us." Kingsley said to Harry. "And the rest of you can follow behind."

"No!" Harry said sharply. "If you're protecting me, then you're protecting all three of these ladies as well."

"But..." Shacklebolt started but Tonks cut him off.

"That might be for the best Shack." She said and shrugged when he looked at her questioningly. "I don't think you'll get Potter to go along without them."

"If that's the way it's got to be." Shacklebolt said. "Remus, I'd like to go in front with me to help clear a wider area as we go."

They were led down the hall toward the golden gate. As they neared it, Kingsley directed them toward a small desk where a man was engrossed in his copy of the Daily Prophet. Over the desk was a sign that said. "Security".

When the guard didn't look up when the procession drew near, the Auror with the eye patch slammed her hand down on the desk. "Don't let us bother you Eric." She growled. "Think you could pay attention ever so often."

The badly shaved wizard in the peacock blue robes looked up sharply and then jumped to his feet as he dropped the paper. "Yeah sorry."

"Process these guys in." Auror Dervens said. "They're here for Pettigrew's trial of course."

The guard's eyes moved over the assortment of people in front of him and his eyes landed on the scar on Harry's forehead. "You're Harry Potter." He said as his eyes widened.

"Quit gawking and start working." Kingsley said sharply.

"Yeah sir of course sir." Eric replied timidly. "Who's first."

Remus nudged Harry forward. When he was close enough, the guard nervously waved a long skinny golden rod over Harry's front and then back.

"Wand?" Eric asked next as he held out his hand expectantly. Harry looked questioningly at Shacklebolt who nodded. Harry pulled his wand from his pocket and handed it to the guard. Eric held the wand gingerly as he laid it on a brass instrument with a dish hanging from a chain. The device immediately started to vibrate. After a few

seconds a strip of parchment came out of an opening at the bottom. The guard wizard tore off the parchment and read out.

"Eleven inches, phoenix-feather core, been in use for four years. That correct?" Eric asked in a voice that cracked with the pressure to perform his job under the scrutiny of four Aurors and Harry Potter, not to mention the most beautiful girls he'd ever seen watching him.

"Yes sir." Harry replied.

It took Eric three tries to put the paper on a small brass spike that was on his desk before he handed Harry's wand back to him.

"He'll need a badge as well." Shacklebolt reminded the guard.

Eric nodded and directed Harry to speak into a hole on a post near the desk. "State your name and purpose for the visit."

"Uhm...Harry Potter and I'm here for Peter Pettigrew's trial."

The security guard reached into a slot on his desk and removed a square silver badge and handed it to Harry. "This needs to be visible at all times you're in the Ministry."

Harry nodded as he looked at the badge. It had Harry Potter/For Trial written on it. He pinned the visitor's badge to his robes.

"Who's next." the guard asked. Fleur immediately stepped forward. Eric just stared at her for a few seconds before Auror Dervens hit him in the arm, hard. A few seconds later the guard was reading from another piece of parchment as he rubbed his arm where he'd been hit by the Auror again.

"Nine and a half inches, Veela hair core, been in use for seven years."

Hermione was next.

"Ten and three quarters with a Dragon Heartstring core. Been in use for four years."

Gabrielle followed her and her wand was quickly registered and a visitor badge given.

Finally Remus went through the same procedure and the guard said to the eye patched Auror. "Anything else?"

"No." She replied curtly.

Harry and the others were led through the gates as another group had queued behind them. Harry looked back in time to see the guard had picked back up his newspaper and was ignoring the next set of people needing to get through security.

They walked down a small corridor where at least twenty lifts were located. All with gold wrought grills.

"We can't all fit in the same lift, so Mr. Potter and you..." He pointed to Gabrielle. "You come with me and Tonks. You two," He pointed to Fleur and Hermione. "Go with Remus along with William and Sonja."

A lift opened and as Harry started to get on it, he was startled to see Arthur, Percy Weasley and another man he'd never seen before standing there. "Remember to do your part and I'll..." The unrecognized man was saying as the lift opened. He immediately became quiet as he saw all the blue robes about.

"Harry." Arthur said at once. He was smiling but it was obvious he wasn't in his normal jovial mood. "Remus, hello Hermione and nice to see you again Miss Delacour." He said to Gabrielle. "And of course you as well Miss Delacour." He finished to Fleur.

"Fleur please." Fleur responded.

"Thank you. I see you've got your guards." He stated as he saw all the blue robes standing around.

"Weasley." Shacklebolt acknowledged.

"Headed down for the trial?" Arthur asked.

"Yes sir." Harry replied.

"We were too."

Harry looked at Shacklebolt who motioned for him to enter the lift. Seven people were a tight fit but they did squeeze in. Harry saw a bit of motion above him and stared up in wonder as he saw two paper aeroplanes flying above them. They were light purple in color and as they flapped their wings above them, Harry could see the words Ministry of Magic written on them.

Arthur saw what Harry was looking at and said. "Those are inter-departmental memos. We find them to be cleaner than owls."

"I can imagine." Harry replied still watching the memos circling.

The lift clattered to a stop a short time later. As the doors opened a female voice announced. "Level Nine Department of Mysteries."

"What's the Department of Mysteries?" Harry asked curiously as they left the lift. Several other lifts were stopping there and other witches and wizards were exiting as well. Obviously the trial of Peter Pettigrew was going to draw a crowd.

"It's where they study various unusual magic things." Arthur replied as Hermione and Fleur along with their Auror escort disgorged from another lift.

"This way." Shacklebolt said as he led the group down the corridor where a single black door stood. Right before they got there, he turned left and started down a staircase.

"Courtroom Ten?" Remus asked.

"Yeah." Shacklebolt replied. "Largest courtroom there is here at the Ministry. Seems every witch and wizard around is trying to attend this trial knowing Potter will be here." The steps had ended onto another corridor. The corridor reminded Harry of the dungeons at Hogwarts, but this one had witches and wizards congregating in various spots all down it. "Excuse us, move aside." The deep voice of Shacklebolt called to one group and then another as he and Remus pushed through the people. The other Aurors flanked the group of young people as they followed the two men.

As they walked past, the conversations the people had been engaged in ceased and heads turned in their direction. He could hear 'Potters', 'Harry', 'Boy-Who-Lived' and 'there he is' from the

groups as he passed. Gabrielle pressed herself closer to him and his other bondmates comforted him as they continued toward the end. Finally they arrived at an open door where a rumble of many voices could be heard. As Harry entered through the doorway he felt himself returning to Dumbledore's pensieve. He instantly recognized the Courtroom where the Lestranges had been sentenced. He stopped as he looked around. Ahead of him he could see the chair with the chains and rising all around were bench seats made of stone. Many witches and wizards were already seated. On the bench directly in front and above the chair were a few witches and wizards all wearing the plum colored robes with a silvery 'W' woven on the left side.

"We need to keep moving..." Shacklebolt started.

"There you are Percy." a frilly high-pitched voice said. When Harry looked at the noise he saw the same toadlike woman he'd seen with Minister Fudge the night Voldemort had returned. She also wore the same plum color robes as the other witches and wizards Harry had seen in the seats.

"Yes Madam Umbridge." Percy replied. "I had..." He looked at his father and at the man who was with them. "Last minute things to take care of."

Umbridge noticed who was standing amongst the blue robed Aurors. "Mr. Potter." She said in a sickly sweet tone that made an involuntary shudder run up Harry's spine. Umbridge then looked at the two blond girls beside Harry. "And you must be Minister Delacour's daughters." She said. Harry noticed her facial expression seemed to change. It reminded him of the same look Narcissa Malfoy had at the World Cup.

"Yes ma'am." Fleur responded. "And zis is 'Ermione Granger."

"Yes," Umbridge replied. "A muggleborn from what I hear." She made the word seem more of an insult than a description. Umbridge quickly turned back to Percy. "We have lots to do today before I can take my seat on the Wizengamot, but tell me why I shouldn't fire you? I had Amelia Bones in my office asking why you've been inquiring about Potter's security."

"But you told..." Percy started.

"I did no such thing." Umbridge snapped. "Don't start your lies in here Mr. Weasley, you're already in enough trouble with the Ministry." She glared at her underling. "Now come with me before you cause any more trouble."

Percy nodded and Harry noticed him glance at the man who had been with him and Arthur. That man followed shortly afterwards in the same direction Umbridge and Percy had left.

"She's.." Fleur started as she stared in the direction the toad woman had left.

"Harry." Another voice said, interrupting her. One with a grandfatherly tone to it. Harry would recognize the voice anywhere. He turned to see the Headmaster there along with Alain Delacour. Dumbledore wore the same Maroon Robes with the 'W' woven as he'd seen in the benches in front of the chained chair. His 'W' was golden.

"Good afternoon sir." Harry said and then he smiled at Alain. "Sir."

"Ze Dursleys 'ave been treating you well?"

"Excuse me, but we need to get Potter away from the door." Shacklebolt said before Harry could answer. His eyes were continually watching people enter and leave the large chamber. "This is not a very secure spot." When he was sure he had everyone's attention he led them through a door near the back of the courtroom. Behind the door was a small room with several chairs and tables.

"This is where witnesses are normally kept until they are ready to testify. You'll stay here Mr. Potter until right before the trial is to begin. Then you'll enter the courtroom ahead of the remaining Wizengamot members." Shacklebolt said as he nodded toward another door. "They'll be coming from their area there."

"Sir, could you call me Harry." Harry said. "I don't feel like Mr. Potter."

"Very well Harry." Shacklebolt said. "I'm Kingsley then. I will be leaving one person in here while the rest of my team and I will be

right outside the door to prevent unnecessary interruptions. If you need anything don't hesitate to ask."

"Thank you sir."

"Doing my job Harry." Kingsley replied. He looked at Tonks. "You'll stay in here."

"Yes sir." Tonks replied.

When the other Aurors had left, Harry turned to Alain and Dumbledore. "About the Dursleys...uh.. I need to talk to you both about that." Harry started. "But first, I'd like to thank you sir." He nodded toward Dumbledore. "I know Remus and Padfoot couldn't have done today without your help."

"You're welcome." The Headmaster replied. "It's something that I should have thought to do earlier, but sometimes I find it difficult to return there." The last he said in a much quieter voice.

Harry remember the headstone of Dumbledore's mother and sister and he again wondered what might have happened to a much younger Dumbledore.

The Headmaster's eyes wandered to each of the young people and ended on Hermione. "Miss Granger, did you enjoy your visit with Bathilda?"

Hermione could barely contain the smile that was on her face. "Yes sir." She replied as she clutched the book she'd been given even more tightly to her chest.

"Is that...may I?" Dumbledore said to her as he recognized the book she held.

Hermione nodded as she held out the treasure she'd been given to Dumbledore.

The old wizard took the book and ran his hand over the cover. He looked at Hermione. "You do understand what this is?"

"Yes sir." Hermione replied.

"You must have impressed her greatly."

"She said she thought I'd value it for what it was and not for what it's worth."

"I'm sure you will at that." Dumbledore agreed.

"She...she also said I reminded her of you at my age."

"I hope you found that to be a compliment?" He asked with a smile.

"Yes sir, I did sir."

"Would you like me to protect this for you?" He asked as he once again touched the book. "Or maybe Alain will store it at his house?"

Hermione looked at the book greedily. She really didn't ever want to let it out of her sight, but she knew it would be safer with one of those two men. She then thought of the perfect person to protect the book. "Sir can you let Madam Pince look after it?"

"Of course." Dumbledore replied. After a small hesitation he asked. "Can I presume by that request, that you are still considering returning to Hogwarts?"

"We are sir." Harry replied. "But we haven't decided one way or the other yet."

"Of course." Dumbledore replied. "I hope you didn't take my question to be anything but an inquiry. Now you said something about the Dursleys?"

Harry nodded and started describing the altercations they had had with Vernon and Dudley over the past week. Alain Delacour was becoming visibly angered while Dumbledore developed a look of sadness on his face.

"I...we've tried sir." Harry finished. "We tried to just avoid them, but no matter what we did.."

"Zose pigs wouldn't leave us alone." Fleur finished for him.

"Very well." Dumbledore replied. "Can we discuss this further after the trial?"

"Yes sir."

They heard a door open and turned to see a person emerge from the door that Shacklebolt had said the Wizengamot was located.

"Harry Potter." Said the man who had emerged. Harry found himself looking at Cornelius Fudge who stood there beaming with a wide smile on his face. "I'm sure you've been looking forward to this day haven't you."

"This day could've happened a lot sooner if you'd have believed us last year." Harry pointed out.

"Yes well those things happen." Fudge replied as some of the smile disappeared from his face. "You have to understand how it looked to the Ministry. Now I'm sure after today we can let bygones be bygones and move forward."

"And my Godfather? He should be here as well, but he can't because you still haven't cleared his name."

Fudge now had a nervous look on his face. "Harry, it just wouldn't do to have the Ministry look so bad after the last two years, not to mention all the years he was in Azkaban. Now I assure you that after Pettigrew's trial we can make sure that he's cleared quietly..."

Harry's eyes narrowed as he worked to keep his anger in check. "NO SIR!" He said quite loudly. "The Ministry spent two years running him into the ground with his picture in every paper around." Harry felt Alain's hand on his shoulder but he wasn't finished. "That's after you falsely imprisoned him for years." He was glaring at the Minister now.

"Arry be careful." Fleur said. "E is ze Minister of Magic."

"I DON'T care!" Harry exclaimed to her.

"Don't put 'im in a corner." She warned. "You still might need 'is 'elp."

"But Sirius..."

"Doesn't care 'ow 'e is cleared. But if it really matters to you zen make it 'appen. Ze Minister wants something from you and if you give eet, 'e can survive ze damage from publicly announcing Sirius is innocent."

"My support? But he's been paid off..."

"You can always withdraw your support later." Fleur said. "But I zink you need to consider zat if ze Minister loses support right now, it could disrupt ze entire Ministry. Zey need to be concerned about Voldemort, not political infighting to who gets to be ze new Minister of Magic."

The Minister was watching they Boy-Who-Lived wearily. He knew that he was in a difficult position politically no matter which way he turned. He had hoped that by making today happen, to publicly bring Pettigrew to trial he could garner Potter's support. His eyes hardened as he thought that if he was forced out of office, he'd take a lot of people with him.

Harry Potter sighed finally and continued. "Sir, I know the Ministry and you in particular might be hurt politically by a public announcement for Sirius, but maybe if I was willing stand by your side and thank you in such a case, maybe even give my support to you..." He let the offer linger. Harry felt he'd done the right thing when he felt Alain give his shoulder a squeeze. Though he still didn't like it.

Cornelius Fudge isn't the sharpest wizard around, but even for him it only took a few seconds for him to realize what the offer would mean to his career. A sense of relief flooded his mind. "Maybe it is for the best to have a public announcement for Mr. Black in that case."

"Thank you sir." Harry said. "The sooner the better."

When Cornelius had disappeared back through the door, Alain spoke up. "Very well done 'Arry." He said. "I zought you were about to lose your temper."

"I did sir. Fortunately Fleur was there for me." Harry replied. "It still felt wrong."

"It often does when you're 'aving to choose ze lesser of two evils as zey say." Alain explained. "But your Minister is a known entity and to force 'im out right now could result in conflict within ze Ministry itself, at ze very least political maneuvering zat could take away from ze fight zat everyone needs to concentrate on."

"We need to start getting ready." Dumbledore said. "The trial is to begin in fifteen minutes." He gave a small smile to Harry and then turned and walked through the door to the Wizengamot room as well.

With nothing to do but wait, Alain Delacour and Remus settled into seats. Alain pulled out several sheets of parchments and started reviewing them. Harry found himself unable to sit still and started pacing as he waited the few minutes.

It was another minute when the Wizengamot door opened and Madam Umbridge came out with Percy Weasley beside her. She was holding something in an open container.

"Now Mr. Weasley you need to take this container to Department of Mysteries and have them tell us what it is..." She was saying.

"But can't it wait until after the trial?" Percy asked.

"No!" She snapped, but at the same time she seemed to trip. The contents of the container went flying and most of it landed on Gabrielle. The bright greenish liquid covered a good portion of her robes.

"Why did you trip me Mr. Weasley." Umbridge almost shouted at her assistant.

"I...I didn't." Percy replied.

Gabrielle was just standing there in disbelief as the liquid poured off her.

Fleur had pulled out her hand but cleaning spells were having no effect on the liquid stains.

"Come with me young lady" Umbridge said to Gabrielle. "I'll make sure you're cleaned up since it was my assistant's fault."

"No Ma'am." Tonks said immediately, placing herself between the Undersecretary and the door. "I'll take her."

"Nonsense." Umbridge replied. "There is no need for security in this matter. I'll make sure she's cleaned and back in no time." She tried to put her arm around Gabrielle and guide her toward the door.

"I'm sorry ma'am, but these people are under our protection."

"Do you think I, the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister am a threat to this lady's safety Miss...what is your name Auror?"

"Tonks Ma'am." Nymphadora answered. "But..."

"Then move aside so I may assist this young person so we can start the trial." Umbridge stated in her sickly sweet high-pitched voice.

"I'm sorry ma'am." Tonks tried again, but was looking nervous. "I can't do that."

"Ze Auror is quite correct." Alain Delacour said to Dolores Umbridge as he rose from his seat. "She and 'er Aurors 'ave been been assigned our protection and of course a 'ighly placed person with your responsibilities can't be expected to deal with accidents." He turned to Tonks. "Miss Tonks if you could make sure my daughter is taken care of it would be appreciated."

"Yes sir." Tonks replied and led Gabrielle out of the room.

Umbridge watched the two leave the room. Before the door closed the Auror with the patch over her eye entered and took up the spot near the door. Dolores turned to her assistant and snarled in bad temper. "Get out Weasley. Get out, plan on cleaning out your desk on Monday."

"But...But.." Percy started but then nodded. He turned and left the room.

"Hem...Hem." Umbridge cleared her throat when she noticed everyone staring at her. "I need to take of other business then." She said as she also disappeared out the door into the courtroom.

"ARRY!" A mental scream came from Gabrielle five minutes later. "TONKS..." But her voice in his head trailed off.

"Something's wrong with Gabrielle!" He shouted to everyone else. As everyone scrambled to their feet, Harry closed his eyes and concentrated on his youngest bondmate to try to see what was wrong. As he touched her mind he found himself experiencing a familiar floating sensation. There was a whisper, but he couldn't make out what it was saying.

"Arry..." Gabrielle's voice called again but it was much fainter, as if she was in a deep hole.

"Gabrielle!" Harry called out to her.

"Zere's a voice calling to me..." Gabrielle called to her bondmate as her voice came even fainter.

Harry finally realized the feeling he was experiencing. He hoped Fleur and Hermione were alerted to his own thoughts since he felt he needed to keep his full concentration on Gabrielle. "I think someone is trying to imperius you angel. Stay with me..stay with me, don't listen to anybody but me."

"Someone is trying to attack Gabrielle." Fleur said to Sonja, Remus and her father. "Harry's with her trying to help."

"But Potter's..." The Auror said in obvious confusion as she looked past them at the person they were talking about.

"Just do something." Remus said. "Find her, we can explain later."

"Tonks is with..." Sonja started again.

Hermione was already moving. She yanked open the door to the courtroom. "Kingsley right? We think Tonks and Gabrielle are in trouble. You need to find them."

"What? Why do you say that?" He asked.

"Just find zem. Quickly." Alain said as he came up behind Hermione.

Shacklebolt knew something had happened and it was easier to react. He turned to his Aurors. "They probably were headed for a place to clean up that mess, spread out and search."

"But Potter..."

"I'll stay here. Find any other Aurors and get them searching as well." Kingsley said. He turned to Alain. "Sir can you let the Wizengamot know we'll have a delay?"

"Yes, but find my daughter." He replied.

"We will sir."

When the Aurors had disappeared he turned to Hermione. "Now why do you think there is trouble." He asked sternly.

"Harry and .. well we are connected sir." She explained. "Harry can hear her thoughts..." She was wringing her hands. "Fleur and I can hear his, he's helping her fight an imperius curse sir...he's saying everything he thinks of to her so we can hear it. He's too busy trying to concentrate to talk to us directly."

"But..." Kingsley started then stopped. "Never mind, you can explain it all later. Can you find out where she is?"

"I don't want to interrupt Harry or cause him or her to lose their concentration, but I'll try."

"Fight it angel." Harry was saying. "Listen to me."

"Harry, can you ask her where she is?" Hermione's voice floated in.

"Angel, did you hear Hermione, can you tell me where you are?" Harry asked.

Gabrielle's voice was stronger but still far away. "Sixth level I zink. Ze voice...it's saying it kill you when ze trial starts. It keeps repeating it."

"Sixth level is where you are." Harry repeated hoping Hermione heard. "Aurors are searching for you."

"Arry," Fleur's voice came quietly. "Tell 'er to pretend she's imperiused, if ze person cursing 'er zinks she is fighting it, zey might kill 'er before ze Aurors can find 'er."

"Can you pretend Angel." Harry asked Gabrielle. "Pretend to listen to the voice, but stay with me. can you do that?"

"You'll stay with me?"

"Always angel." Harry replied and he sent his love over the bond. "Always."

In a sixth level bathroom, a young Veela girl started reciting in a whispered tone what she was hearing the voice say, "I must kill Harry Potter when the trial starts, I must kill Harry Potter when the trial starts, I must..."

"Very good." A high-pitched voice said from under an invisibility cloak. "You'll also not remember who imperiused you."

"I will not remember who imperiused me." Gabrielle replied.

"Some day the world will hopefully be rid of all of you unnatural creatures." Dolores Umbridge said, "But at least today you're good for something. Stupefy!" The last said as her wand came from under her cloak. The red beam hit Gabrielle who slumped to the ground next to an unconscious Tonks.

"GABRIELLE!" Harry shouted out as he opened his eyes. Seeing Shacklebolt he quickly filled him in on what he had experienced.

"At then end she said the voice sounded like the lady who spilled the stuff on her." Harry said. He got up and started for the door only to be stopped by Shacklebolt.

"Where do you think you're going Harry?" He asked.

"To find my... to find Gabrielle." Harry said forcefully. "Get out of my way."

"No." Kingsley replied. "Sit down. I've got Aurors looking for her, people who know the Ministry. From what you told me, the person wants Gabrielle alive so she's not in any danger."

"I'M GOING!" Harry yelled.

"POTTER," Shacklebolt yelled louder. "Have you ever been to the ministry? Do you know where the bathrooms are? You'd end up lost and we'd have to find you as well. Now sit down and wait. Let us do our job."

Harry glared at the large black man before he sighed. "You better find her."

"We will. Now you said it was the woman who spilled the stuff on her, Madam Umbridge?"

"Yeah the toad looking lady?"

"Damn." Shacklebolt muttered. "I need to get Amelia Bones down here immediately and we need to keep this quiet."

"What?" Harry exclaimed. "We need to arrest her immediately."

"Pot...Harry," Shacklebolt started, "Madam Umbridge is the Senior Undersecretary, basically Minister Fudge's most senior adviser and very powerful politically. You can't just start throwing accusations around until we can build a case. Think about it, what proof at this moment do you have outside of what you experienced? I know without some kind of..."

"What's going on?" The voice of Albus Dumbledore asked. When Harry turned he saw Alain Delacour there as well.

Harry quickly told the two men what he'd experienced and who had done it.

"I was just about to call Amelia down." Shacklebolt said.

"I'm here already." Madam Bones said. "When I saw Minister Delacour ask for Dumbledore and he immediately said the trial was delayed for a short time, I followed immediately expecting trouble." she explained. "What has happened?"

Again Harry started explaining what had happened. When he'd finished the head of the DMLE sighed.

"So Arthur was right." She murmured.

"Pardon?"

"I'll explain later." Amelia replied. "Have we located them yet?"

"Not yet." Shacklebolt answered. "Do you want me to search for the Undersecretary as well?"

"I'd bet she's already in her seat." Bones replied.

Shacklebolt strolled over and open the door and looked out. A second later he was back. "She is."

"So what evidence do we have?" Amelia asked.

"What do you mean what evidence?" Harry exploded. "Gabrielle can tell you exactly what happened."

"It will be her word against Dolores." Amelia explained. "That will not go very far."

"But...but" Harry sputtered. "She tried to imperius Gabrielle to kill me."

"I know that Mr. Potter." Amelia replied curtly. She sighed as she looked at the young man. "If we just arrest her, she'd never go to trial. There's simply no evidence."

"Sirius was..."

"There might not have been a trial for Sirius Black, but at the time there was evidence." Bones replied, cutting off Harry. "I reviewed his case and to tell you the truth, he probably would have been convicted if he'd been tried. There were plenty of eyewitnesses, the finger of Pettigrew and even Dumbledore claiming Black was the secret keeper, so it is not the same as this. If Tonks can't provide any evidence, then we have the word of a very young lady against the Senior Undersecretary and that isn't going very far. Especially with her political allies."

"She is right." Alain replied. "But..."

"She's awake." Harry blurted out. "They found her and Tonks." He said. He again started walking toward the door.

"Where are you going?"

"I need to comfort Gabrielle." Harry said. "Either one of you can show me the way, or you can start looking for me now."

"Kingsley, have your.." Amelia stopped and looked at Harry, "Harry can you just tell Gabrielle to have the Aurors bring her here..."

"Madam Bones, may I make a suggestion?" Alain Delacour said.

"Of course Minister." Madam Bones replied.

"Zis woman zinks my daughter is imperiused to kill 'Arry during ze trial oui?" Alain started. "Zen let's use zat against 'er."

"How?"

Alain Delacour started explaining his idea. "But we need your Minister to listen and watch." He finished.

Amelia looked at Dumbledore. "Do you have a better idea?"

"Unfortunately no." The Headmaster replied. "We have to convince the Minister to allow the use of Veritaserum on Madam Umbridge and this might be our only shot."

"Then bring the Minister down here immediately." Bones said. She turned to Harry, "Tell Gabrielle to not come to courtroom right now." She then turned to Shackbolt, "Go tell the Aurors the same thing or we'll have to explain something I'm thinking Harry and these women don't won't to bring out yet."

"Yes Ma'am."

Ten minutes later Harry and his group left the small room and started walking toward their seats immediately to the left of the Wizengamot area. Harry had a hard time not looking at the toad like woman who was watching them intently as they walked past. When

he sat down the rest of the party left a small area for Gabrielle beside Harry.

"Ready angel?" Harry asked as he glanced toward the door of the courtroom.

"Oui." Gabrielle replied nervously.

Harry's gaze turned to the door to the small room as it opened and the remaining members of the Wizengamot entered the courtroom. They filed solemnly into their seats. Had Dolores Umbridge not been lost in her thoughts as to what was to occur, she'd have been surprised by the stare Minister Fudge kept on his Senior Undersecretary. A stare that continued once he sat down in a seat that was behind and to the left of her.

Dumbledore glanced at Harry long enough to see the young man give a small nod. He then stood and prepared to address the crowd. He paused when the door to the courtroom opened and Gabrielle entered along with Nymphadora Tonks beside her.

The blue robed Auror and the young French witch walked toward the Wizengamot. Tonks stopped and whispered something to Dumbledore while Gabrielle stared around at the crowds. Tonks then escorted Gabrielle to her seat next to Harry.

"Before we begin the trial you are all here to see." Dumbledore began after enhancing his voice. "We had a serious crime committed a short time ago. One of our Aurors and this young lady were attacked and stunned in one of the bathrooms. If anyone saw anything that might help find the person or persons responsible, please see someone from Law Enforcement before you leave today."

"Think it's time love." Harry said. "I love you."

"Now it is time for the trial to begin." Dumbledore said.

Gabrielle immediately stood as she pulled out her wand and aimed it at Harry who was now looking at Dumbledore though his peripheral vision clearly had Umbridge in sight.

"She's looking right at you, now!" Harry said to his bondmate.

Gabrielle spoke a word in french and a red light came out of her wand. Immediately Harry slumped forward and fell onto the floor. Several people around them started yelling in confusion.

"SHE'S KILLED HIM! SHE KILLED POTTER" Shrieked Umbridge, who had pulled out her own wand and aimed it at Gabrielle. "KILL HER!"

"I'll take that." Amelia Bones said as she snatched the wand from Umbridge's hand.

"Everyone stay calm." Dumbledore said with his amplified voice. "No harm has come to Harry Potter." He looked over at the raven-haired young man who had stood up and pulled Gabrielle into his arms. They both looked over at Umbridge who was staring at them wide-eyed.

"You failed." Harry said to the toad-like woman. "She was never in your control."

"How did...I mean I don't know what you mean." Dolores replied, though a look of fear passed over her face.

"Minister?" Amelia Bones asked as she looked at the Minister of Magic.

"Umm..." He started nervously. He'd agreed hesitantly to watch his Undersecretary when Harry Potter and Dumbledore had told them who the young french witch had said tried to imperius her. He had to admit that she had acted just as they had predicted."Well..." He said next.

"See if this helps you decide." Amelia said. She held up her own wand and place it's tip to the tip of Umbridge's and said. "Prior Incantato." From the tip of Dolores' wand rose ghostly image that was clearly Gabrielle, and then another also of Gabrielle. "Stunner and Imperius, Minister. Both on the young witch. You yourself saw her reaction. She was ready to hide her crime by killing the young lady immediately."

"That wasn't me...I mean..." Dolores looked around wildly as she realized she'd been caught. "I must have been imperiused to do

it...yes I'm starting to remember. It must be wearing off. It was that Blo...Weasley...Percy he imperiused me. He wants my job."

Amelia Bones smiled to herself before she continued. "So you're saying Mr. Weasley imperiused you and made you imperius someone else to commit murder."

"Yes...of course." Umbridge sputtered. "Cornelius, you have to believe I'd never do anything like this."

The head of the DMLE looked over at Tonks and said. "Can you please go find Percy Weasley and his father. There will be one other gentleman who'll want to come, please let him."

"Yes ma'am." Tonks replied and hurried off.

"When do you think he imperiused you Dolores." Amelia asked when she turned back.

"Right after I fired him of course..." Dolores said. "Yes...I remember coming out of that room and then... I saw him and then ...he did it."

"So just a few minutes ago?"

"YES! That's what I said." Umbridge said regaining her confidence. "Now arrest him and let's get this trial started."

Several other Aurors had joined their boss including the head of the Aurors Rufus Scrimgeour. As they waited for Tonks to return, the noise in the courtroom was growing louder and louder. Finally after five minutes Tonks returned with the two red-headed men and the other gentleman Harry had seen in the elevator earlier.

"Percy Weasley you've been accused of performing an Unforgivable on the Senior Undersecretary." Amelia said. "May I see your wand?"

Percy pulled a wand from his robe and handed it over. Holding it up she said. "Rufus, first can you search Percy to insure he has no further wands on him and then check the last spell on this wand?"

Scrimgeour did both a magical search and then a physical search as well. He looked at Bones and shook his head. He then touch the tip of his wand to Percy's wand and said the correct spell. Nothing

happened. He tried once again and frowned in confusion when again no spells were detected. He looked over confused at his boss.

Amelia turned to the gentleman who was with Percy and Arthur and she raised her own wand. "Finite Incantatum" She said and his features started to change.

"Gawain?" Kingsley asked the man when it became apparent who it was. "What are you doing?"

"Doing a special task for me." Bones replied. "Has Percy Weasley been out of your sight?" She asked Gawain Robards.

"Only when Madam Umbridge took him into the Wizengamot Chamber." He replied. "I couldn't follow them there."

"So you were with him when he came out after being fired?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Did he at any time cast a spell on Madam Umbridge?"

"No Ma'am."

She reached into another pocket of her robes and produced another wand as she turned to look at Dolores Umbridge. "This is Percy Weasley's wand. He's been carrying a fake wand all evening. That's why it's not responding to Rufus' spell." She looked at Cornelius Fudge. "I suspected she might try something, but thought she'd use Percy to do it. He's been under surveillance all night with no wand. He could not have imperiused anyone. Your Senior Undersecretary is lying."

Dolores Umbridge's jaw dropped as she tried to speak.

"Minister?" Amelia asked again.

Fudge took a deep breath and replied. "By executive power, I give you the authority to administer Veritaserum on Dolores Jane Umbridge at your convenience to determine her guilt or innocence in the events that have transpired."

"NO!" Umbridge spat. "You can't do that to me. I didn't do anything wrong. I mean she's only a creature not some..." She shut her mouth when she found Harry Potter's wand in her face and a glare that started deep in his green eyes.

"You will never speak of my..."

"Mr. Potter, put your wand away." Amelia Bones demanded. "I do not want to have to arrest you."

Fleur and Gabrielle both put their hands on his arm and tried to pull it down. "Er opinion means nothing love." Gabrielle said.

Harry slowly lowered his wand but kept glaring at the toad like woman.

"Sir we have a full Wizengamot present, may I question her here and now?" Bones asked.

Fudge could only nod as disbelief at what he'd just witnessed washed over him.

"Cornelius?" Umbridge asked in her own disbelief.

"Dolores Umbridge, regardless of the results of your questioning you are hereby fired from the position of Senior Undersecretary and Department Head of Magical Cooperation." Fudge said as his eyes took on a hard edge. "Madam Bones you may do the questioning now."

"NO!" Umbridge shouted as she realized she was indeed going to be questioned right then. She looked around wildly and then tried to bolt.

Hermione was standing watching what was happening and as Umbridge took moved down the steps, she stuck her foot out and tripped her. The toad faced woman tumbled down the stone steps until she was sprawled on the floor of the courtroom. Tonks bound her and levitated her to the chair that was in the middle of the room. When she was seated, the chains snaked around her body.

"Cornelius!" She cried out again, she then tried to call out to other political allies who refused to admit they knew her.

"Administer the truth serum." Amelia said.

When the three drops had been administered to a non-cooperative Umbridge, her features finally slacked and her eyes became unfocused.

"What is your name?"

"Dolores Jane Umbridge."

"Did you attempt to imperius Gabrielle Delacour?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I needed Harry Potter out of the way and having her kill him would have allowed me to get her kind controlled like they should be."

The uproar from the crowd was deafening. Dumbledore called for quiet.

"Were you yourself imperiused to do this?"

"No."

"Did you ask Percy Weasley to get the security plans for tonight?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I needed to know how to get close to the creature and by having the Blood Traitor do it, if something went wrong I could blame him since he was already a disgrace to the Ministry."

Amelia looked over at Percy who was standing next to his father. She gave the young man a small nod. She then looked back at the Wizengamot and Dumbledore.

"Administer the antidote please." Dumbledore said. Once the antidote had been given to Umbridge he continued. "Dolores

Umbridge. Under truth serum you have confessed to the attempted use of an Unforgivable and attempted murder. Do you have anything to say in your defense."

"She's only a dark creature out to control people. Potter's only an attention-seeking brat." She spat as she struggled against the chains that held her. "They're trying to destroy our traditions and the lives of honest witches and wizards. I did what I did to save our society. Can't you see that?"

"Witches and Wizards of the Wizengamot." Dumbledore said when Umbridge had finished. "You have heard a full confession by Dolores Umbridge and she has no remorse for her actions. By our laws, the use of, or even attempted use of an unforgivable against an unwilling person is an automatic life sentence in Azkaban. Does anyone here believe there are anything that could justify the use of the curse in this case or agree with her reasons for using it?"

Every Wizengamot member could feel the eyes of the people in the seats surround the courtroom watching them. A chant started from the seats. "Azkaban, Azkaban..." Soon it had spread to the entire courtroom. Not even the closest supporters of Umbridge dared raise their wand in her support.

"Then I request a vote to sentence Dolores Umbridge to a lifetime in Azkaban." Dumbledore said after asking for calm in the courtroom. Amelia's wand was first in the air, hers was followed quickly by several others, Minister Fudge's was one of the last to be raised, but within a minute the vote was unanimous.

"Dolores Jane Umbridge, you are hereby sentenced to a life term in Azkaban." Dumbledore said to the witch who was struggling against the chains of the chair. "Aurors please remove her from the courtroom." He then again addressed the courtroom at large. "Peter Pettigrew's trial will start momentarily."

It was another fifteen minutes before the doors opened and the small balding, beady eyed man with a missing hand was levitated in by a team of Aurors. It was obvious the man was unconscious. Behind them was the clump, clump of the wooden leg of Mad-eye Moody. He had taken it as his personal mission to ensure this man made it to the trial without escaping. Above all else he hated traitors.

"He tried to change into his animagus form when we opened his cell." The lead Auror explained. "We had to stun him." Pettigrew was placed in the chair and once the chains had magically secured him he was revived.

"Peter Pettigrew, you have been brought before the Wizengamot to be tried on several charges." Dumbledore started. "You are charged with the deaths of twelve muggles on the second of November ninety eighty-one. You are also charged with the betrayal of James and Lily Potter leading to their deaths at the hands of Lord Voldemort," A gasp ran through the courtroom as the name was said, "you also are charged with the aiding in the kidnapping of Harry James Potter and his attempted murder by Lord Voldemort, and finally you are charged with treason to the British magical society by aiding the return of Lord Voldemort by use of a Dark Ritual. To each of these charges you have confessed in a private interrogation. How do you plead to these charges at this time?"

Pettigrew now looked like a rat caught in a spotlight. He was frozen in place and shivering as he stared blankly ahead with his beady eyes.

After a few seconds Dumbledore continued. "Very well, we will proceed with a new interrogation under Veritaserum."

The questioning of Pettigrew took fifteen minutes but finally it was over. He had once again told of his being the Secret Keeper for the Potters, of his betraying them to Voldemort, of his encounter with Sirius Black afterwards, of his hiding as a rat for twelve years and finally of his seeking out and helping Voldemort in his return.

"Witches and Wizards of the Wizengamot," Dumbledore said. "You have heard the confession of Peter Pettigrew for the actions he was charged with. I shall first call for a vote to decide his guilt or innocence. Please raise your wands if you consider Peter Pettigrew to be guilty of the crimes against the magical and muggle societies with which he is charged."

The vote was again unanimous as every wand rose in unison.

"I call now for a vote to send Peter Pettigrew to Azkaban for the rest of his..."

"Chief Warlock.." Cornelius Fudge spoke up.

Dumbledore sighed. He knew what was coming and didn't think he could prevent it. "Yes Minister?"

"I personally feel the crimes this man has committed deserve more punishment than Azkaban. I call for a vote to have Peter Pettigrew subjected to the Dementor's Kiss."

From the crowds the chant rose, "Kiss, Kiss, Kiss..." Dumbledore was about to call for the vote that he had wished to avoid when another voice spoke.

"Sir, may I speak?"

Dumbledore looked over at the voice and found himself looking at Harry Potter. The young man had risen from his seat and was waiting for Dumbledore to answer. He stared at the young man trying to determine what he might want to say, but then replied. "You may." At those words the entire courtroom fell silent.

Pettigrew instantly started pleading. "Oh kind Harry, I know you are just like..." An Auror beside him sent a silencing charm which ended the pleading.

Harry looked at the man who was his father's friend. "I gave you your life last year." He told the man. "And once again you ran to your master and caused more deaths. Last year I would have pleaded for your life." Harry stopped and sighed as he looked at the people looking back at him. "Peter Pettigrew did not just betray my parents, but he betrayed this entire country. By bringing Voldemort.." Again the crowd gasped when Harry used the Dark Lord's name, "It's just a name, a silly made up name in fact."

Harry laughed when Fleur told him what it meant in French. "Sorry, but his name is a little less frightful in french, do you know his name means in that language? It means 'Flight from Death'." Harry had lost his nervousness now. "Tom Marvolo Riddle is his real name. He shares the muggle name of his muggle father." Another clatter arose around the courtroom but Harry kept up his speech. "Yes he is a half blood, but this isn't about him, it's about Pettigrew, he betrayed us all when he brought back Voldemort. Every death that happens because of that night he will share in the responsibility. For each of

those lives Pettigrew needs to be held accountable." Harry looked at Dumbledore and shook his head slightly. "I disagree with the Headmaster and the Minister in regards to Pettigrew. He should not be in Azkaban reminding the survivors of the victims on a daily basis of his crimes, he needs to be in a cold unmarked grave. But..but having almost been kissed myself last year, I don't believe anyone should suffer that fate. Does not the Ministry have a method for taking a man's life without feeding creatures that only cause despair?" Harry looked over at Remus who was staring back at him, and a final thought came to mind. He turned to the Wizengamot. "Besides, if Pettigrew's soul were to make it to an afterlife, would any of you want to prevent my parents from being able to kick the hell out of him when it does?"

Dumbledore studied Harry for a few seconds. Though he hated the idea of a death to any man, he felt Harry had struck a balance that fit the situation. Justice without unnecessary cruelty. "There are three options of punishment it seems," He said as he addressed the Wizengamot, "life in Azkaban, Dementor's Kiss or the Veil. Those in favor of the Veil as requested by Harry Potter please raise your wands at this time."

Three quarters of the wand rose within ten seconds.

"So be it." Dumbledore said. "Peter Pettigrew, for your crimes you are sentenced to death by Veil at the earliest possible time."

"What's the veil?" Harry asked Remus.

"There is a device in the Department of Mysteries that instantly kills anyone passing through it. Even the body is destroyed." Remus explained. "It's a very humane way to kill someone."

Harry nodded as he watched the man who had betrayed his parents struggling against the Aurors as he was removed from his seat, once again he tried to change into his animagus form only to be stunned by Moody.

"Is there further business for the Wizengamot?" Dumbledore asked.

"Minister?" Harry called to Cornelius Fudge. "What about my Godfather?"

Minister Fudge had suffered a heavy blow politically from the unexpected trial and conviction of his Senior Undersecretary but he knew the first rule of politics very well. That rule simply said that basically the last opinion formed by the people is the one that will be remembered. In this case he wanted the people leaving the courtroom to associate his Ministry with Harry Potter rather than Dolores Umbridge.

"Chief Warlock, I would like to address the courtroom." Fudge said.

"Of course Minister." Dumbledore said.

When Alain Delacour nudged Harry, he sighed but knew what he had to do. He left his seat and walked over and stood next to the Minister of Magic.

"In light of the testimony of Peter Pettigrew, I hereby declare that Sirius Black is innocent of all charges." Minister Fudge announced. "I instruct the Department of Magical Law Enforcement to immediately cease any actions in searching for Mr. Black. All legal blocks to his accounts and any property confiscated in the investigation is to be returned immediately to the rightful owner." He almost had a pleading look as he turned to Harry.

"Thank you sir. I know that you were only looking out for the public's and my own safety in your attempts to capture my Godfather." Harry said. "He was not sent to Azkaban without a trial under your Ministry." Harry remembered what Amelia Bones had said earlier and he continued. "Even if he had been tried, the evidence in lieu of Pettigrew's capture and confession was convincing. I am glad the Ministry can now put this behind them and work on the goal of eliminating the threat of Voldemort." At a mental nudge from Fleur, Harry offered his hand to the Minister. The *POP* of flashbulbs almost blinded him as the moment was caught for the next day's Daily Prophet.

*** E E ***

When Percy had been cleared of the accusations made by Dolores Umbridge, he and his father had returned to their seats where Bill and Molly were waiting for them. After both trials had ended they had left for the Burrow. She at once started complaining about Gabrielle and Veelas until her husband rounded on her.

"Molly you are just as bad as Umbridge." Arthur said.

"WHAT?" She exclaimed. What do you mean? I'm nothing like that woman."

"She considers Veelas creatures and that is basically what you've been doing." Arthur said. "You are classifying an entire race of people based purely off of a trait and the antics of a few. What do you know of Gabrielle? What do you know of the young lady who had to fight against being imperiused. Who someone was trying to use to kill Harry? I don't quite understand, but someone was saying it was something to do with her love for Harry that allowed her to fight it. Now if you mention one more bad thing about Veelas you can sleep in your kitchen." Arthur turned and left the kitchen.

At first Molly started packing the stuff from her kitchen she'd plan to take to Grimmauld place, but as she did, she saw the book Ginny had given to her several days earlier. With her husband's words still ringing in her ears, she picked it up and thumbed to the first page. Two hours later her husband found her sitting at the table still reading.

Chapter 38

When the trial was over, Harry and his fiancées were escorted back into the witness room to wait for everyone else to leave. After at least a half hour, the noise level outside the door abated and Dumbledore walked through the door.

"I'm sorry for the delay. As you can imagine there was much to be done with the unexpected second trial." He explained. "Pettigrew will be sent through the Veil Monday morning. Do you wish to be there?"

"We...I thought we would be in France by then." Harry said. "If the Dursleys are kicking us out tomorrow, what would we do until then? I know we're going to be at the Grangers all day, but what happens on Sunday?"

"If you do not mind, I'd like to stop by the Dursleys tomorrow and speak to them." Dumbledore said. "I will not force anything, but even another day will give them extra protection."

Harry shrugged. "We had a deal sir and I'll stay as long as they'll cooperate, but I'll not let them bother us again."

"Sir, I'm sure my parents would let us stay two nights if we need to." Hermione said.

"Very well." Dumbledore said. "I'll have a word with Petunia tomorrow and we'll see where it goes from there. " He looked at Gabrielle who was still clutching at Harry. "As for Madam Umbridge, she'll be transported to Azkaban with the change of guard later tonight."

The door opened again and Minister Fudge along with Amelia Bones led several people through the door. Alain, Remus and Sirius were walking behind them chatting together while two Aurors were following behind them.

"Pup!" Sirius said when he saw Harry. "Look at me, I'm respectable again."

"Respectable?" Lupin scoffed. "Innocent and not being pursued yes, but I think you still have a ways to go before we'll call you respectable."

"So why are you here?" Harry asked as he gave his godfather a hug. "And why the Aurors?"

"These guys are in charge of my safety." Sirius replied with a smile as he thumbed toward the blue cloaked Aurors. "It might take a while for people to get the word that I'm innocent and they're to be there to make sure nothing unfortunate happens. I'm here to answer a few questions. Madam Bones would like to know how I escaped and all that. I just asked to stop in and see you before enduring the inquisition. Heard there was some excitement?"

"Yeah that Ministry lady tried to make Gabrielle..."

"Uh...Mr. Potter." Minister Fudge interrupted nervously. "Would it be possible to not mention the Ministry when discussing Dolores...I mean Umbridge."

"E's concerned zat people might associate what she did with ze Ministry." Alain Delacour explained.

"I understand sir." Harry said to the Minister. "I just hope you're more careful with the next person you put into such an important position."

Fudge grimaced. "Yes, well evaluating a person is difficult sometimes."

"Sir, so far I've seen you with Lucius Malfoy and now this person." Harry said. "Please do a better job of evaluating who you get your advice from. Right now you need to look for people who are more interest in fighting Voldemort...like.... like," Harry tried to think of someone to suggest but he didn't know many adult witches or wizards. He could only think of one name, "Arthur Weasley."

"I will certainly do my best to find the right person." Fudge stated fidgety. He actually wasn't lying since he knew he couldn't afford another scandal.

"Alain, I think we should take them back to the tent for now." Dumbledore said.

"I'll help take them sir." Remus offered. "I won't get to see them for the next week or so since I need to leave town tonight." He looked at

Harry. "I didn't tell you this morning but I am now an official employee of the French magical government. I am told by my boss," He looked over at Alain Delacour, "that I need to start work. I have to get to Paris by Monday to start organizing an office and then make contact with several applicants."

Harry could see a real happiness had developed in Remus Lupin's eyes. He realized this day had been just as much for him and Sirius as it had been his. It was their time to pay their respects to their friends and see the person who had not only betrayed Harry's parents, but them as well get what he deserved. "I'm happy for you Moony. You deserve it you know. So not going to be around on Monday?"

"No, the longer I wait to get started the more potential for Voldemort to get a foothold in the werewolves." Remus explained. "Sirius will be with you Monday though. I'll be around the Delacour home on occasion this summer so you'll see me then. Besides I promised to show you how to detect wards."

"Speaking of wards," Dumbledore said, "I understand from Minerva that you wish to learn Runes?"

"Yes sir." Harry said. "I think I need to make a change."

Dumbledore studied the young man carefully. He had never tried to influence the choice of classes Harry took in case it should work against the development of whatever power Harry was suppose to have. But when Trelawney had made the new prediction a year ago, Dumbledore had started hoping that with Harry around her, she might make another one that could help further guide what needed to be done to end the threat of Tom Riddle. Unfortunately, he realized that he could not risk anything that would force Harry on a path away from Hogwarts. He finally nodded. "I'm sure we can arrange something."

"Thank you sir."

It was only a short time later the bonded had been apparated by Remus and Alain to deserted alley outside the wards.

"Do you wish me to come 'ave a word with ze Dursleys again?" Alain asked.

"Non Papa, 'Arry 'as already said I could turn zem into pigs if zey try anything again." Fleur responded with a gleam in her eyes. "After today, it will not take much to get me to do it."

"Then Sirius and I will be 'ere tomorrow to take you to ze Grangers." Mr. Delacour said.

"Uh..actually we can get there on our own." Hermione replied. "Our elves will gladly take us."

"Zank you for reminding me, we'll 'ave to make arrangements for ze elves to go to our 'ouse." Alain said.

"They can't apparate there?"

"Non, ze international wards would prevent it as well as ze distance is much too great." Mr. Delacour replied. "I will arrange for a portkey to take zem to France and zen 'ave one of our elves escort zem ze rest of ze way."

"Why can't they just travel with us?"

"Because my eldest asked me earlier to arrange a trip to Paris for you." Alain answered with a smile.

"Paris?" Harry questioned Fleur.

"Oui, someone proposed today and my soeurs and I would like our rings." Fleur replied.

Harry looked from one to the other of his smiling bondmates before sighing exaggeratedly. "Ok." He looked at Alain, "You might want to schedule another trip to Gringotts before we leave as well. Something tells me those rings aren't going to be cheap."

"We need to do something about the solicitor mentioned in your mother's will." Hermione remembered.

"Zen right after ze we finish at ze Ministry we will take care of both of zose zings." Mr. Delacour responded. "He looked at his watch. "It's too late to make an appointment with ze solicitor, but I'm sure at least a clerk zere can tell us what might be in your mother's file. If

you need to follow up and it's not urgent, zen we can make arrangements at a later time."

"Thank you sir." Harry replied.

"Leave ze tent up." Alain instructed. "We will stop by and take care of it. Zen we will come by ze Grangers tomorrow evening."

"I'm hoping my parents will let us stay over tomorrow night." Hermione said.

"Just don't be mad at zem if zey decide against 'Arry staying." Alain said. "Zey are good people who love you."

"Yes sir."

A short time later they were all back in the tent eating a dinner of lamb chops, seasoned potatoes and squash along with fresh baked breads. Remus and Alain both had been invited but they knew the bonded had been through an emotional day and probably would like time alone.

They had just finished eating when they heard the back door open. Fleur immediately pulled out her wand expecting the worst was about to happen.

"Harry?" The voice of his aunt called. "I saw you arrive earlier, could I..," Petunia hesitated before continuing, "could I speak to you?"

Harry's eyes darted to each of his bondmates but then he rose from the table and walked outside. He knew each the ladies were following with their wands out.

"Yes Aunt Petunia?" Harry asked when he got outside.

"I....I wanted to know how the trial went." Petunia asked nervously. Her eyes were moving from one young lady to the next. "If you'd like, you can join me for a tea."

"We prefer to stay away from Vernon and Dudley." Harry replied. "As much as Fleur really wants to turn Dudley into a pig..."

"They're not here." Petunia blurted out. "Vernon is having dinner with a client and Dudley is having tea with a friend."

Harry snorted at the last statement. The likelihood of Dudley Dursley having tea was along the lines of the Chudley Cannons winning the Quidditch League.

"They are." Petunia said thinking that Harry didn't believe her.

"Oh I believe you think that." Harry said. "But you really have no idea about your son. Having tea? That is actually funny. You really do believe anything he tells you don't you."

"Dudley doesn't lie!" Petunia said testily. "He's the most thoughtful..."

Harry laughed out loud this time. "He lied about what happened the other day." Harry said and the continued before Petunia could argue. "Why would we lie about it?" He asked. "If I wanted revenge on Dudley or you or Uncle Vernon I could easily have Fleur or her father do something. I don't need money, I am definitely not jealous of him. We only came here to try to protect you instead of going to the Delacours immediately."

"But..." Petunia tried but failed to muster an argument.

"Would to let me try to prove it to you?" Harry prodded his aunt. "Prove I've not been lying? Prove to you that your son is not the angel you think he is?"

"How?" Petunia asked before she could stop herself.

"Hermione will you get my cloak?" Harry asked and after she agreed and hurried off, Harry explained. "I have a cloak that will let you be invisible. Will you wear it and follow me?"

Petunia's eyes widened as Hermione came rushing back carrying the cloak. "A magical cloak?" She asked unable to hide her astonishment. "No...get it away from me. I don't want anything to do with your...your..." Her voice fell silent.

"Do you really hate magic that much?" Harry asked. "Or is it old jealousies that cause those responses? I'm offering you a chance to

share in a little magic. I can't make you magical but I can give you a little magic." He took the cloak and threw it over his head and disappeared from sight.

Petunia stared at the spot her nephew just vanished and old feeling from her childhood emerged. She swallowed hard. "I..I can really be invisible?" She asked finally.

"Yes, but I think Fleur will need to put a silencing charm on you." Harry replied as he pulled the cloak back off of him. "The same thing that Mr. Delacour had on you that first night. I promise that she'll remove it later."

"But...why?"

"You have to know about the secrecy laws." Harry said and when Petunia nodded he continued. "I can't risk you reacting to something you see and letting other people know about the cloak. We could get in trouble."

"Oh..." Petunia said as she looked almost hungrily at the cloak, "but what are you going to show me?"

"You son." Harry replied. "He's not the angel you think he is, I know you'll never believe me but I hope for yours and maybe his sake, you'll let me show you."

Petunia didn't know what to think. She was fighting an internal battle about wanting to hate the child in front of her against a longing that she'd suppressed for so long. Finally she nodded.

They walked into the house with her and watched in amusement as Petunia put the cloak over her head in front of a mirror and then pulled it off her head and other parts.

"For someone who doesn't like magic, you seem to be having fun." Harry commented.

Petunia stopped immediately as her cheeks turned red. "You never did tell me how the trial went." She said finally.

"Peter Pettigrew was found guilty." Harry said.

"Pettigrew? I thought it was Sirius Black. That's what was in that note Dumbledore wrote."

"At the time that's what they thought." Harry replied. "But last year we found out Sirius was innocent and Pettigrew was guilty. My godfather is now a free man and Pettigrew will get what he deserves on Monday."

"Dementors?" Petunia asked.

"You know about Dementors?" Harry asked in astonishment.

"I...I heard that boy telling your mother when we were kids." Petunia explained. "He said really bad people get their souls sucked out of them."

"Boy?" Harry questioned. He knew his mother didn't start liking his father until long after she'd already have known about them herself. But then he remembered that there was a wizard his mum knew when she was growing up, her best friend before coming to Hogwarts. "You mean Severus Snape don't you?"

"You know him?" Petunia asked in obvious surprise.

"He teaches at Hogwarts." Harry replied. "I know he was Mum's friend, but I hate him."

"He...he was the reason your mother and me..." Her voice trailed off as she sighed. Then she continued. "He'd tell her stories of Hogwarts and the magical world and then he'd be rude to me because I was a muggle. He even made a tree branch fall on me." She again feel silent. Finally she asked. "Is...that how you knew about my letter? Did he tell you?"

"No." Harry replied gently. He'd been stunned by the confessions of his Aunt. "Mum told me." At the look on Petunia's face he explained what had happened that night two weeks ago when Voldemort returned. About being captured and rescued. He told her about surviving another killing curse and meeting his parents. He found it quite an unusual experience taking to his aunt about the magical world while she was holding his invisibility cloak.

"You ran in front of a killing curse?" She asked incredulously.

"E saved my life." Fleur said. "Actually zat was ze fifth time in ze last few months."

"You came and rescued me too." Harry said to her as he took her hand and kissed it. "In more ways than one."

"Are you really dating my nephew?" Petunia asked the eldest bondmate.

"Oui." Fleur said. "We all are. My Papa was not lying. In fact 'Arry proposed to us all today."

"That's preposterous, you can't...I mean." Petunia sputtered as she looked at Harry. "You can't marry more than one of them and...and you're only fourteen."

"We are bonded magically." Harry explained with a shrug. "It's an exception to the laws and yes for some reason these three ladies have agreed to marry me. In fact they are planning on us stopping in Paris to shop for rings. As for my age, I'll be fifteen in a couple of weeks and I'm leaving it up to them when we actually have the wedding. As long as it's what they want, I don't mind if it's next week or five years. So you can see I really do not have anything to be jealous of Dudley for."

Petunia sat down heavily on the seat that was close by as she digested what she'd heard. Though doubts and fears ran through her mind, she realized if her nephew was to be believed then there was definitely some kind of an afterlife and she very well might have to answer to her sister. She looked at Harry. "I'm sorry." She said. "I....I..."

"There's been too many years and too much...other things," Harry cut her off, "for me to casually forgive all that had occurred, but someday in the future it might happen."

Petunia nodded slowly. She looked down at the cloak that she still held in her hands and swallowed. She looked back up at Fleur. "Do whatever you need to do so Harry can show me what he wants to show me." Petunia said. The nervousness in her voice was very evident.

Fleur lifted her wand and said. "Silencio. Now Mrs. Dursley, try to say something."

Petunia opened her mouth and tried to speak but no words came out.

"I promise zat I will remove it." Fleur said. "Now get under ze cloak." She turned to Harry. "Be careful. I'm going to follow but stay out of sight. I just wished I'd learn to disillusion myself." She finished by giving Harry a kiss.

Petunia blushed as she watched the oldest of the three young witches kissing her nephew with obvious enjoyment. She quickly pulled the cloak on but she couldn't tear her eyes away from the scene.

Harry turned to Gabrielle and Hermione. "Split up and look for Dudley. Keep out of sight. If you see him, let me know where you are." He kissed each of them before they left. After giving them a couple of minutes' head start he turned to the spot where he knew his Aunt was under the cloak. "Follow me but remember to not come out from under that cloak if anyone can see you." He led her out of the house and started walking slowly down Privet Drive.

"The play park." Hermione said a few minutes later. "They're hustling some kid who can't be older than ten years old."

Harry started in that direction, continuing at a pace he knew his aunt could keep. Finally he made it to the park. He could see Dudley and two other kids surrounding the kid Hermione had mentioned.

"Be careful 'Arry." Fleur said. "I can't do magic with this many muggles around."

"You can't be SEEN doing magic." Harry replied as he surveyed the play park. "Go to the dark area to the west. You can banish a rock or two if you need too. They'll think someone is throwing them."

"Oui. I'll be zere." She replied.

"Hermione and Gabrielle, you go near the slides. You can make noise by hitting rocks on them."

"Headed there now."

Harry then whispered. "Aunt Petunia, don't come too close. You might get hit by mistake, but try to get close enough to hear your wonderful son." When he was sure everyone was in place he walked toward Dudley. As he neared one of Dudley's gang, a boy Harry recognized as Malcolm yelled out.

"Hey Big D, Evans was holding out. He had three quid in his pocket." He held up his hand to show the three coins he'd taken from the boy.

"Give it back." The ten year old boy said. He had tears in his eyes. "Mum gave them to me for helping her clean."

Dudley laughed at the boy as he took a long drag on the cigarette between his fingers. "Yeah well tell your mum thanks from us." He said after he blew smoke into the face of the kid and then he pushed the young boy to the ground. "The next time we ask if you have any money, you better not lie to us."

"Give them back Dudley." Harry said as he walked up to the gang of bullies.

Dudley felt a moment of panic but as he looked around and realized Harry was alone and he had his friends, he relaxed. "And what are you going to do about it Freak." He asked with a smirk.

"I thought Aunt Petunia said you were having tea this evening?" Harry asked as he ignored the threat.

"We finished early." Dudley laughed. "We decided we needed some dosh to get some more smokes." He held up the cigarette between his fingers. "One of our last ones."

"So you go beat up a ten year old for it?" Harry asked.

"Shut up freak." Dudley replied. "What we do is none of your business."

"Yeah I guess not. But if you're the ones breaking the streetlights, you missed one on Wisteria Walk."

"We'll have to get it later then." Dudley laughed toward his friends.

"One day someone's going to see you and tell Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia."

"They'd never believe it." Dudley smirked.

"That's right; you're their Ickle Diddykins aren't you."

"SHUT UP!" Dudley snarled again.

"Going to beat me up now?" Harry asked. "I told you the other day that I'm not the same kid you beat up all the time when we were younger."

"Get him Big D." Malcolm cheered. "I bet he has a few quid on him too."

"Just you and me Big Diarrhea?" Harry asked. "Just like last time? How's your nose?"

Dudley suddenly grew nervous as he saw his friends looking at him expectantly.

Harry felt a hand on his shoulder and he looked back quickly. Not seeing anyone he realized his Aunt was trying to tell him something and it didn't take long for him to figure it out. "Go over to darkness in the west side. Fleur is there. You can remove the cloak and she'll cancel the silencing charm." He whispered quickly. He felt the hand squeeze slightly and let go. "Fleur, Aunt Petunia is headed your way to be unsilenced."

Dudley's friends took the reaction from Harry to be a signal that he was scared and looking for help. "He's scared Big D; get him now." The scrawny rat faced Piers Polkiss said. Having just witnessed Pettigrew's trial, Harry couldn't help but wonder at the similarities between Polkiss and Wormtail, all the way from the pointed faces to the same initials. "Do all bullies have a rat faced friend?" He wondered.

"Let's give my Aunt time." Harry directed. "Hermione, Gabrielle can you make some noise over there?"

A few seconds later loud clanging came from the slides. All three teenage bullies looked around nervously. "Who's there?" Malcolm called out. "Show yourself." He yelled but moved behind Dudley who was looking for someone else to get behind.

The next noise came from the other side as Petunia Dursley had obviously been freed of her silencing charm. "DUDLEY DURSLEY!" She screeched as she stormed into the lighted area. "WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING? YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL I TELL YOUR FATHER."

Dudley's eyes flew open wide as he whirled toward her. "Mum?"

"I...I've got to go Dudley." Piers said as he turned to leave. He'd only moved two steps when...

"STOP WHERE YOU ARE POLKISS!" Petunia said. "You too Malcolm. We'll be taking a trip to see your parents as well."

"It was the freak mum." Dudley said pointing at Harry. "We were trying to stop him from beating up Mark here. Isn't that right EVANS?" He tried to give the young boy a menacing look.

"They stole my quid." Mark said pointing at Dudley and his friends.

"I know." Petunia said angrily. "I saw it." She turned to her son. "Give them back now and drop that...that thing."

Dudley realized he was still holding the burning cigarette.

Harry felt a wave of satisfaction as his aunt continued to berate his cousin. He mentally nudged his bond mates and started out of the park. It wasn't long before they all were back in the tent.

"I'm headed to bed." Harry announced soon afterwards. The emotions of the day had caught up to him, from the trip to Godric's Hollow to the attempt on Gabrielle to the trials to the talk with his aunt and the confrontation with Dudley all had taken their toll and he was physically and emotionally tired.

It was Fleur's night to spend with Harry, but she turned to her sister. "You go Gabrielle. I zink you need to spend time with 'Arry tonight."

Gabrielle rushed over and gave her sister a hug. "Zank you, but are you sure?"

"Oui ma soeur." Fleur said. "I know you need 'Arry tonight and I zink 'e needs to be with you."

Gabrielle didn't say anything as she entered Harry's room fifteen minutes later. She crossed the room quickly and climbed into his bed. "Hold me." She said to her bondmate.

Harry wrapped his arms around her and pulled her close.

"She wanted me to kill you." Gabrielle whispered finally. "She tried to make me...what if it 'ad 'appened?"

"It's alright Angel." Harry assured her. "You love me too much to hurt me."

"I do love you." Gabrielle said as she tried to snuggle closer to Harry. "I know even if you'd never saved my life or I'd never 'eard of you, I would 'ave fallen in love with you if I could 'ave 'ad zese months with you."

"And I'd have fallen for you my angel." Harry said quietly as he kissed the top of her head. "You were very brave today. You fought that witch and fooled her and because of what you were able to do she was caught. Now she'll spend the rest of her life in Azkaban with the Dementors."

"Only because you were zere." Gabrielle said with a hint of sadness.

"I was there only because you gave me your love." He kissed her again. "Besides I didn't help you convince her that you'd try to kill me. I know that was hard, but you did it."

"I had too...I knew I had too or she might not be caught."

"Exactly Gabi. You bravely faced down that monster and now she's gone." Harry lifted up on his elbow and blew out the candle. Then after setting his glasses aside, he pulled Gabrielle into a spooning position and wrapped his arm around her body.

She put her hand on his and guided it to her breast. "Old me like you 'old Fleur." She pulled his hand so it was over her one of her breast.

"Are you sure?"

"Oui, I am not a little girl, I am your wife-to-be." Gabrielle thought softly. "And you're my 'usband. I know you zink I am beautiful but I also want to know you find me as desirable as my sisters."

"You are definitely not a little girl." Harry whispered into her hair as his hand cupped her small firm breast. "And you are very desirable; every bit as desirable as Hermione or Fleur."

Gabrielle sighed into her pillow as a smile of contentment appeared on her lips. Soon she drifted off to sleep.

**** July 11th 1996 ****

"I picked up the videos you had reserved." Mrs. Granger said to her daughter when Dobby and Winky had delivered the bonded to the Granger's house early the next morning. "I would offer you breakfast, but I haven't been allowed in my kitchen ever since Winky got here."

"Winky and Dobby be cooking breakfast." The little elf said. "Yous all sit down."

"She cooks very well." Jean said smiling. "And I doubt I can find a speck of dust anywhere in this whole house."

"She's going to go to France with us, but if we return to Hogwarts, you're more than welcome to have her come clean and cook some more." Hermione said. "She seems to like it here."

"Hello Harry." Richard Granger said as he entered from the garage. "When did you get here?"

"Not long sir." Harry replied.

"I've got my clubs in the car already. When you're ready to go we can get out of here."

"Not even a hello for me Dad?" Hermione asked.

"Hello princess." Richard said to his daughter as he kissed her on the cheek. "And good morning to you Fleur and Gabrielle." He turned back to Harry. "Now I thought we'd get to the golf shop early. I was there earlier this week and they said they'd get your measurements and see if a regular set of clubs will work for you. For today they'll rent you a set and we'll get on the range. If we get you swinging decent maybe we can get out on the course."

Hermione rolled her eyes at her father. "Dad please don't go overboard today." She turned to Harry. "Dad can get a little overzealous when it comes to golf."

"It's alright Mione." Harry said. "I'm looking forward to it." He then remembered something. "Uh, sir, I don't have any muggle money, I only have galleons."

"It's my treat Harry." Richard said. "You might be richer than I am but Jean and I make a decent living."

"Dad..." Hermione said exasperatedly. "Harry doesn't care about his money."

"Sorry princess, I was teasing, but it might have come out wrong." Richard said. "Doesn't that Gringotts place have some kind of debit or credit card so you don't have to go there every time you want money?"

"I don't think so." Harry said. "But we can ask."

"If they don't, why not convert some of your gold into pounds and open an account at Lloyds so it's easier for you?"

"That's not a bad idea." Hermione exclaimed. "We'll be spending some time in the muggle world and having access to money in it would be a good thing."

"Maybe we can do that on Monday as well." Harry suggested.

"Well the morning is going quickly." Mr. Granger said as he looked expectantly at Harry. "We need to get out there before it gets too hot."

"Please bring him back in one piece." Hermione told her father. "And no interrogating him. I'll know if you do." She suddenly got a worried look on her face. "Do you think it's safe?" She asked Harry. "I mean should you go?"

"I'm not going to hide Mione." Harry replied. "Besides I seriously doubt Voldemort or any Death Eaters are going to be watching muggle golf courses looking for me."

"Just be careful." Hermione pleaded. "You have your wand don't you? You know you're allowed to do magic in self defense."

Harry pulled his wand out and showed it to her.

"I'll keep an eye on him Princess and I'll not question him...too much anyway." Richard said. He kissed his wife and guided Harry out toward the garage.

Hermione looked at her mother who had an amused look on her face as she watched her husband leave.

"And he was ready to kill the young man only a few months ago." Jean said in an amused voice. "If Harry'll play golf with him, he'll be ready for you two to get married tomorrow."

"Well mum..." Hermione said, "it might not be tomorrow, but I am engaged. Harry proposed to us all yesterday. We're going to stop in Paris to shop for the rings."

"But you're only fifteen?" Jean blurted out. "I mean, I know you said this is permanent and you'd marry him someday, but...but..."

"It's not going to happen this summer." Hermione said as she looked to Fleur and Gabrielle for confirmation of that. "In fact Harry just said he'd leave it up to us to decide."

"Oh..."

Hermione described what had happened the previous day and how Harry had proposed. By the time she'd finished telling about the proposal at Harry's parent's grave Jean Granger had fallen in love with the young man as well.

"He just wanted us to really be his family." Hermione concluded with a smile. "Fleur," She nodded to her bond sister, "told me a couple months ago that she already considers Harry her husband and really he already is all of ours."

"Why?" Jean asked the blonde witch.

"What is marriage, Madam Granger?" Fleur asked. "Isn't it when you commit yourself to one person forever? Promise never to love another?"

"So with this bond of yours, that's what you've done isn't it?"

"Oui, 'Arry is ze only person I will ever love, or even can love in zat fashion." Fleur explained. "Our love is committed to 'Arry."

"You as well Hermione?" Jean asked.

"Yes, I think so anyway." Hermione replied. "The bond is there and I know I love him mom and I know he loves me. I can't imagine loving anyone else. So I think Fleur has a good point. I'm committed to him so what would you call it?"

"Just no grandchildren anytime soon." Jean said with a sigh. "I'm not sure I'm ready for that."

"Of course not." Hermione replied. "I don't think any of us are ready for that as well. Except Winky, she's looking forward to children to take care of." Hermione explained.

"So...are you..." Jean asked. "I mean you're being careful right?"

While Hermione turned very red, Fleur answered the question. "Zough we are sleeping in 'is bed individually, we are not sexually active, nor will we be anytime zis summer."

"You expect me to believe that a teenage boy is sleeping with three beautiful young women and nothing is happening?" Jean asked with an eyebrow raised in question.

"It's true mum." Hermione replied through her blush. "We have..."She looked at her bond sisters as she shrugged, "other issues that we have to work through."

"Issues?" Mrs. Granger asked in immediate concern. "Is there a medical problem? Maybe I can help."

"No, it's," Hermione sighed, "it's that in this bond we feel Harry's emotions and we discovered that when he or we experience a pleasant experience such as an exceptionally good kiss," Her looked down at the floor before looking back at her mother, "we all feel it."

"Oh?" Jean Granger asked and immediately blushed as she realized the implications of what that meant. 'OH...' slipped out of her lips as her eyes widened.

"Oh is right." Hermione said. "So we have to make sure we're all ready for it to happen."

"This relationship is a lot more complicated than it seems isn't it?"

"Very much so." Hermione replied with a small laugh. "Uh, I know this might not be the best time I to ask, but we need to spend the next two nights here. The Dursleys want us to leave."

"But I thought you were there to protect them."

"We are but they...they... let's just say we can't stay there anymore."

"You want Harry to sleep here as well?" Jean asked.

Hermione nodded nervously.

"Maybe if he sleeps on the couch it will be alright. I don't think you father is ready to find you in bed with him."

Hermione threw her arms around her mother. "Thanks mum."

Jean looked past her and said to the two French witches. "Come here, I guess I really do have three daughters now don't I?" After giving all three witches a hug she said. "Now go watch your videos."

"You can join us if you want."

Ten minutes later Jean Granger, along with three young witches had settled on the sofa as the opening scenes of "An Unearthly Child" with William Hartnell as the very first Doctor started.

Several miles away a 1993 Jaguar XJ12 was on Denewood Rd pulling through the gates of the Highgate Golf Club.

"Well Harry, it might seem tame compared to castles and dragons, but golf is a very difficult game to master." Richard said as he pulled into a parking spot. "Now let's go into the shop and have them size you up for some clubs."

Thirty minutes later Harry and Richard Granger were taking up position on the driving range. Harry had a rented set of Callaway clubs that the Club pro said should work for him and a new pair of hideously ugly golf shoes.

Richard found Harry to have an almost natural swing. Once he got him to not try to hit the ball as hard as he could, Harry's golf balls started traveling fairly straight.

"If you swing too hard you can't keep the club in the same plane." He explained. "The club will swing out and you'll hit the ball outside in and it will put an undesired spin on it."

An hour later Harry's shoulders and back had started to ache as he'd gone through two large buckets of balls with Mr. Granger giving advice on his swing and stance.

"Having fun love?" Hermione asked. "Daddy isn't being too hard on you is he?"

"It's not exciting, but it's very challenging." Harry replied honestly. "I still prefer my broom, but I am having fun. Your father is great person as long you're not pregnant."

"I'm glad." Hermione said. "Dad loves to play and it would be nice for you two to have something you can do together."

"How's your TV watching going?"

"We're having fun." Hermione replied. "Though the TARDIS isn't exactly as remarkable when you've been in a magical tent and traveled back in time."

"The what?"

"Dr. Who's...this." Hermione said. She sent an image of the police box that was a time machine. "It's a time machine that looks like an old police box."

"Your father is suggesting we try to play a round. He's in the clubhouse seeing if there is a free tee time now."

"I expected it. Dad will play any chance he gets."

"I just hope I don't embarrass myself."

"You won't. Oh I happen to mention to my mother about you proposing. I hope that was alright."

"Of course it is, but I better tell your father. I hope he doesn't get mad at me."

Hermione told Harry what her mother had said about Harry, golf and marriage.

"I hope so. I love you and don't want to upset your father."

"Harry, great news; Robin says they had a cancellation and we can tee off in fifteen minutes. That give us just enough time to practice putting."

Harry played respectable to start with. He had a double bogey on the first hole when he ended up in the sand trap on his second shot. He followed that hole up with a bogey on the fairly straight second hole. His ball went into the trees on the third and he ended up scoring a four over. It was on the fourth hole when he decided to broach the subject of proposing to his daughter to Mr. Granger.

"Uh, sir." Harry started as Mr. Granger was teeing up his ball for the very short par three. "I think I need to tell you that I...uh I proposed to your daughter yesterday."

'THUNK' the nine iron dug into the tee box a good six inches behind the ball and stuck. Mr. Granger looked back sharply at Harry. "What did I tell you about golf etiquette Harry? No talking during a swing."

"Sorry sir." Harry replied. He remained quiet as Mr. Granger readdressed the ball and pushed the ball into a short right sand trap. "I...I didn't mean to upset you sir."

"Upset isn't the word." Richard said with a sigh as he looked at his future son-in-law. "Surprised, maybe even shocked but not upset." He shrugged. "You told us it would happen someday. But aren't you too young? You're only fourteen right?"

"Almost fifteen but yes sir."

"When are you planning on the actual ceremony?"

"I left all of that up to them." Harry explained. "I just wanted to make our commitment official, to make us family. If they want the ceremony tomorrow, five years from now or anywhere in between I'm happy with it."

"All three at the same time?"

"Yes sir, well I think so. Again it's whatever they want."

"At least you've learned the first lesson to a successful marriage already."

"What's that sir?"

"Let the women make the important decisions." He winked at Harry. "It frees up more time for golf."

It was on the fourteenth green that the subject was broached again. As they were walking off the green after holing out, Mr. Granger said, "You're not planning on starting a family too soon are you? I mean children. You're very young and I'm not ready to be a grandfather yet, especially with my soon to be sixteen year old daughter."

"Uh..no sir." Harry replied. "We...we aren't ready for that yet. We haven't...I mean we never..."

Richard stopped and looked at Harry. "We need to have one rule between us." He said. "You can talk to me about anything. I truly mean that, anything that is but sex. Never ever mention sex to me. I've accepted that it's going to happen and I hope you and my daughter and your other women are careful, but never ever mention sex. It was two weeks after I gave you the lecture that I realized I'd just given you the how-to manual to my daughter and I...no we can't go there ever again. Understand?"

"Yes sir."

Richard smiled at the young man. "I'm not mad at you. Do I wish I wasn't hearing this until Hermione's thirtieth birthday? Definitely, but we've had a few months to accept what has happened. Jean and I will do anything we can to help. Now let's finish this round and head back home."

As they were walking toward the car after the round Richard put his hand on Harry's shoulder. "I think with a few more rounds under your belt I can turn you into a pretty good golfer. At least when you're married to my daughter I will have a partner for those father son tournaments."

When they got back home Harry was exhausted, so after a quick shower, he laid down with his head in Fleur's lap. He fell asleep with her fingers gently running through his hair.

*** E E ****

It was later in the evening when the doorbell rang at the Grangers' home. When the door was opened Dumbledore and Sirius Black was there.

"Good evening again Mr. and Mrs. Granger." The Headmaster said. "Let me introduce Harry's godfather, Sirius Black."

After the greetings had been exchanged they were led into the room where empty popcorn bowls littered the room and another episode of Dr. Who was running. All of the bonded looked up to see the two visitors.

"Ah, Dr. Who." Dumbledore said as he looked at the screen.

"You know about Dr. Who?" Hermione asked in disbelief.

"Of course. I watched several of them when they were newly shown." Dumbledore replied with a twinkle in his eyes.

Harry shook his head as he tried to imagine Dumbledore sitting in front of a TV eating popcorn. "I presume this is about the Dursleys?" He asked finally.

"Yes, though Petunia was more than willing to allow you to come back, Vernon was adamantly against it."

"So we're not going back?"

"Unfortunately not, and I say unfortunately only in regards to the Dursleys."

"So do you think the Death Eaters will attack them?"

"Sirius has a plan that I think will give them a good chance to weather the summer."

All eyes turned toward the grinning man with black hair.

"I got the idea from your trip to the Hollow yesterday." Sirius explained. "People knew where you were born and made a trip to see it, so I thought we'd tell the people where you spent the last fourteen years."

"Won't that bring the Death Eaters there?"

"By dropping all the protections and publicly declaring where you lived, I think the Death Eaters will know we aren't giving them an avenue to you." Sirius explained. "We're going to put up a magical sign and everything." He acted like he was reading a sign "Here is the former residence of Harry Potter, the only person to ever survive the killing curse. He resided here until the summer of nineteen ninety-five." He looked back at everyone. "We'll turn the Privet Drive into a Potter tour stop."

"But then every witch and wizard around will be coming by." Harry exclaimed.

"Exactly." Sirius smiled. "They will be visited by more 'freaks' than they can imagine."

Harry looked at each of his bondmates as a smile broke out. "Though I really hate the idea of more of the boy-who-lived stuff, I can't think of a more fitting thing for the Dursleys."

"Are you here for the next two evenings?" Dumbledore asked.

Richard looked toward his wife in question.

"Hermione asked earlier and I said it would be fine dear." Jean said. "Harry will sleep on the couch while the girls will stay in Hermione's and the guest room. Our daughter will probably be gone the rest of the summer and I'd like to spend as much time with her as I can."

Richard nodded then smiled. "It's not too late to get a tee time for tomorrow morning then Harry." He said eagerly.

Harry suppressed a groan as he smiled at his future father-in-law. "Yes sir. Sounds like fun. If I can crawl out of bed tomorrow." The final thought was to his bondmates.

"You don't have too." Hermione consoled him. "He'd understand."

"I played Quidditch under Wood. I'll be alright. At least it's not going to be muddy, cold and windy." Harry replied. "Besides it was fun and I want to stay on your father's good side."

*** July 13th 1995 ***

Minister Fudge sat at his desk Monday morning looking over several parchments. He was in a generally good mood. Though the Daily Prophet had published the accounts of Dolores Umbridge's Imperius curse attempt on Harry Potter's life, it had been overshadowed by Pettigrew's trial and the announcement of Sirius Black's innocence. In fact the Saturday Prophet had had a large photo of Harry and the Minister shaking hands.

The door opened quietly and one of his junior administrative persons announced. "Mr. Weasley is here as you requested."

"Show him in please."

A few seconds later Arthur Weasley walked into the office. "You wished to see me Minister?"

"Yes Arthur, please have a seat."

"Is this about Percy? He's unsure if he should report to work or not. Umbridge fired him but..."

"No..no... please let your son know that he still has a job here at the Ministry." Cornelius said. "We need fine dedicated men here. Though I think we need to find a new position for him."

"Sir? Why? I didn't think he did anything wrong."

"Oh he didn't, but it wouldn't be right for him to be reporting to his father."

"Sir?"

Fudge smiled. "I'd like you to take over the Department of International Magical Cooperation. The position is going to be much more critical now. That department will be needed to coordinate any international requirements between law enforcement for the efforts against You-Know-Who."

"Why me sir? I mean I am honored and will gladly take the position, but I have to wonder why I was selected."

Cornelius Fudge pulled out a folder from underneath a stack of parchments and opened it. "Your name came up in a conversation and I took a look at your file. You've run your little department on budget and very well for many years, but mostly you have never engaged in the politics of the Ministry and I need that right now. There is also the fact you have no biases. Outside of the minor incident with the flying car three years ago, you have a spotless record."

"Thank you sir."

"It's the Ministry who should be thanking you Arthur." Fudge said. "And I hope this is an appropriate one."

Arthur nodded. "May I ask who brought my name up sir?"

"Harry Potter." Cornelius replied honestly.

"Thank you sir." Arthur said as he thought of the young man. "I hope I can live up to your expectations in the position."

"Get your current office in order." Fudge directed. "I need you in your new position quickly. Can..". He looked at a sheet on his desk, "Perkins handle your current office?"

"Yes sir and if I may suggest maybe my son could move to my old office."

"That would be splendid." Cornelius exclaimed. "I'm sure he already knows the job from you?"

"Yes sir."

"Then let Perkins know, contact your son and get him here." Cornelius instructed. "Pettigrew will be going through the veil in ninety minutes and I'm sure you'd like to attend."

"I would sir." Arthur replied. "Molly and I were friends with the Potters."

Arthur walked out of the Minister of Magic's office a couple of minutes later. His new position was two grades higher and the pay raise would be substantial. He once again thought of the young black-haired young man who again had made a large impact on the Weasley family.

*** E E ***

Harry and his bondmates had been escorted to the Ministry by Alain, Sirius, Shacklebolt and Auror Dervens mid Monday morning. This time as they exited the gated lifts they entered the black door at the end of the hall. The room beyond was a large black room with at least a dozen handle-less doors all identical in size and shape. As the door behind them closed, the wall of the room started to rotate.

"Safety precaution." Shacklebolt said when the wall slowed and stopped. "Slows down anyone trying to break in here and get out if

they do. Also prevents prisoners condemned from escaping easily." He turned toward the center of the room and said. "Veil Room." To the left of them a door opened. "This way." He said the group of people.

"That's all you have to do? Ask for the room you want?" Hermione asked incredulously.

"Do you know what the other rooms are?" Shacklebolt asked with a grin. "Would you have thought to do it? Sometimes the simplest defenses are the best."

They found themselves in a large rectangular room with stone benches that acted like steps descending a good twenty feet. The benches surrounded a raised stone dais with an ancient stone archway. An old black curtain hung in the opening. It seemed to flutter in a non-existent wind. Standing near the Dais was several people. Harry could make out Dumbledore and the Minister. Standing near him was Arthur Weasley and several other people. Sitting on one of the stone benches was Rita Skeeter.

"Where's Peter?"

"They'll be bring him now. They were waiting for you to arrive."

"Mr. Potter." The voice of Skeeter could be heard. "Can I get a quote?"

"May I suggest," Alain Delacour whispered, "you say something about zis is what 'appens to people who betray ze country to Voldemort. Remember in 'is trial you made it more zan your parents."

Harry nodded. He descended the steps until he was near Skeeter. "Yeah, I guess. Maybe something like Peter Pettigrew isn't just here to pay for his crimes against my parents. He is here because he betrayed us all. Anyone who is willing to betray our society will pay the same price."

Rita's quill was scratching non-stop, when it finally ended she looked up. "Very well said Mr. Potter. You seem to be picking up the politics pretty well, but aren't you concerned statements like that are going to force You-Know-Who to come after you?"

"He's already coming after me. Each and every time he has tried, he has failed. I don't expect he'll stop anytime soon though."

The door from the circular room opened again and Peter Pettigrew was led in. Again Mad-Eye Moody was right behind him with his wand out. When Peter saw the archway below him he grew agitated but the wand in his back kept him moving down the steps.

"Peter Pettigrew," Dumbledore started as he read off a scroll, "per the judgment by the Wizengamot on 10 July 1995 you are hereby sentenced to death by the Veil. Do you have any last words?"

"I..I .." Peter tried to beg. He turned to Harry. "Please Harry, you're so much like your father...he'd never want this for me."

"My father didn't want to die either." Harry said coldly as he neared his parents' betrayer. "For once show the courage the sorting hat found in you and be a Gryffindor."

"Padfoot my old friend..." Pettigrew begged as he saw Sirius.

"A friend you framed? Who forced me to live in Azkaban for all of those years?" Sirius asked as his gray eyes darkened. "You either walk or I'll throw you through that Veil."

"Would you prefer the Dementors?" Harry asked. "I'm sure they can still be arranged."

Peter Pettigrew's shoulders slumped even further than they naturally were as he looked around and only saw cold hard looks. He glanced once more at Sirius and then at Harry. He felt Mad-Eye Moody's wand in his back and he nodded. He only hesitated long enough to take a deep breath before he turned and walked through the archway. Harry kept expecting to see him appear on the other side, but he never came out. When he realized his parents' betrayer was in fact dead, he felt a lump in his throat. He felt Gabrielle's arms around him as he kept staring at the archway. Finally he mentally nodded to himself and turned away.

"The sentence of Peter Pettigrew to death by Veil has been carried out at this time." Dumbledore said quietly. "Please record the time and enter it on the appropriate forms."

The rest of morning passed quickly. They coordinated with Rita about meeting them in France to do the article on what she thought was just Gabrielle. Though they told her the main article would be published in the Quibbler, that she could negotiate a major follow on piece with Witch Weekly. When they left the Ministry they went straight to Gringotts.

Alain had already told them that Gringotts did not offer credit or debit cards since they did not believe in working with anything but gold, silver or bronze. He did tell them that the Goblins had a system where they employed squibs to work at various muggle banks and other financial institutions. That allowed them to move money between Magical and muggle worlds with little difficulties.

"There Mr. Potter." The goblin said. "If you'll just sign here, here, here, here and here, we'll get the requested fifty thousand galleons deposited at Lloyds for you. You'll...wait you missed a spot, you need to sign there as well. As I as saying you'll need to stop by there and see this man." He handed over a normal looking business card. "He'll complete the requirements to set up the account there. Any future transfers can easily be done by request.

"Thank you."

"Our pleasure." The goblin replied. "I also need a signature here and here to change the investments on your accounts. You will be arranging an outside investment company?"

"Yes."

The goblin handed over another parchment. "You'll need to fill this out and have that person or company submit it along with their instructions."

"Thank you."

"Pleasure doing business with such a wealthy young man." The goblin replied.

A short time later they left Lloyds with a book of Cheques which Hermione took possession of and debit cards in each of their names. The stop at the Solicitor's office took much longer. The Junior

Solicitor had a hard time finding the file of Harry's mother and once he had, there had been the question of proving Sirius was the guardian of Harry Potter. Finally it took a small confundus charm to allow the process to move forward.

"Your mother had us set up a trust fund for you." The solicitor said after reviewing the file. "We were the firm that took care of her parents' estate and she took the entire proceeds that came to her and had it put into a trust fund for you. You are to be allowed access to it if you show a need or turn eighteen." The solicitor turned another page in the file and picked up an obviously old envelope. "This is for you." He said as he handed it to him. Harry recognized the same neat handwriting that had been on drawings of the home and land they had found in the vault. Written on the front of the envelope was just 'Harry'.

"I'll read this later." Harry said as he looked at his mother's writing on the yellowing envelope before sliding it into his pocket.

"Now are you in need of your trust?" The solicitor asked.

"No...not really." Harry admitted.

"You will turn eighteen in a little over three years." The solicitor continued. "You can access the trust in full at that time."

"Thank you." Harry said.

"Can you tell us the how much it's worth?" Sirius asked.

"Give me a minute while I get the latest statement from the trust department." The solicitor was gone for ten minutes before returning with several sheets of paper. "The initial value was seventy eight thousand pounds, but it's been growing untouched over the last fourteen years. Its current value is three hundred forty seven thousand pounds."

"Thank you." Harry said. His thoughts were still on the envelope in his pocket.

When they left the Solicitor's office they apparated into a white marble room. The room had several fireplaces. Sitting behind

several small desks were two men and one woman all wearing gold trimmed blue cloaks. On their left breast was a gold symbol.

"Welcome to France." Alain said to Harry before he turned to greet the Aurors who obviously recognized him.

"We apparated all the way to France?" Harry asked.

"Non, zis is ze magical section of ze French Embassy 'ere in London." Fleur explained. "But it is considered French territory."

"From 'ere we can portkey to France without getting approval from ze English magical government." Mr. Delacour said.

"But I thought you could portkey with those stones?"

"Oui, but zose are registered by my government and are a pain when used." Alain explained. "Come with me." He said and started out of the room.

"What are those gold things on their cloaks?" Harry asked as they left the room and started down a thickly carpeted hallway.

"Fleur-de-lis." Hermione said.

"Flower.." Harry said as he looked at Fleur.

"Lily Flower." Fleur interpreted it softly. "Eet's ze symbol of our magical government."

Harry swallowed as he remembered the gold symbol. It seemed like a connection from his mother to his new life. After they walked a good distance he asked. "Where are we going?"

"Zat was ze inward apparation and floo area." Fleur explained. "You 'ave to go to another area to apparate, floo or portkey out."

"Why?"

"Security." Fleur explained. "You can't apparate in and do something and zen go back out of ze same spot. Even if someone were to overwhelm our Aurors in zat room, zey would 'ave to fight many other people before zey could escape."

The continued walking until they came to another white marble room. A single young man sat behind a desk there. Alain was already discussing something with him. As they walked in he turned and smiled as he held up an old towel. "Our portkey to Paris is ready." He said.

"Welcome to Paris love." Fleur said as she helped her bondmate to his feet after he skidded to a stop in another white marble room following a lengthy portkey journey. As they exited the building they had portkeyed into, the Eiffel Tower rose into the sky ahead of them. Gabrielle and Hermione each took one of his arms.

"Beautiful isn't it?" Hermione asked as Harry had stopped and was looking upward in awe.

"You've seen it before?"

"Yes, Mum and Dad have brought me a couple of times."

"We 'ave to find our rings today." Gabrielle said pulling Harry forward.

"Why?" Harry asked.

"Tomorrow ze stores will be closed. It will be Bastille day." She explained.

Three hours, five jewelry stores and an exhausted Harry Potter later the three witches found the perfect rings. The matching sparkling three quarter carat flawless diamond rings also had very small stones set into the band of the ring on either side of the diamond. Each ring had the birthstones of the other two bondmates on her ring to signify the unity of the bond. Hermione's carried the emerald of Gabrielle's birthday and the peridot of Fleur's, while Gabrielle's ring had peridot and the sapphire of Hermione's. The ring that was shining brilliantly in the lowering evening sun on Fleur's ring finger had sapphire and emerald next to the diamond.

"It is time to go 'ome." Alain said when they had met back in the agreed upon place. "It looks like you made your ladies very 'appy 'Arry."

"Maybe, but if I see another diamond in my lifetime it will be too soon." Harry replied. "I never knew there were so many different sizes, colors, clarity and whatever else they kept talking about. I thought you just go into a store and buy a ring."

Alain smiled jovially at the young man. "You shall learn my son. You shall learn very quickly I zink."

"Welcome to our 'ome 'Arry." Apolline said when he exited, or slid violently out of the floo. "Did you trip going into ze floo?"

"No Maman," Fleur replied with a smirk. "Arry doesn't do magical transportation well."

"Well maybe you can spend some time teaching 'im zis summer."

"Oui, or I can always go first and let 'im fall into my arms?" Fleur said jocundly.

"I understand there was an engagement?" Mrs. Delacour asked. "Did you get your rings?"

The next few minutes were spent showing engagement rings to Apolline. Then she said. "Well someone should show 'Arry and 'Ermione to zeir rooms."

"Not yet." Fleur replied. "I...I want to show 'Arry somezing else first."

"What?" Harry asked.

"No peeking." Fleur said, "I want it to be a surprise." She pulled out a length of dark cloth and wrapped over Harry's eyes. "Can you see? Tell me ze truth."

"No, and I wouldn't lie." Harry replied.

She took one of his hands, and Gabrielle took another and led him outside.

Harry first noticed that it was much warmer here than it had been in Paris. He was led down a path and over grass. Finally they stopped.

"Ready?" Fleur asked.

"For what?"

"Zis." Fleur said and removed his blindfold.

Harry found himself looking at a memory, or what had been Fleur's thoughts the day she had created her Patronus. They were standing on the bluff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. A few birds were gliding on the gentle breezes.

"As beautiful as I imagined it to be?" Fleur asked.

"It's nearly perfect." Harry said mesmerized by the sight.

"Nearly?" Fleur asked.

He moved backward so that his bondmates were all between him and the sea. "Now it's perfect." He said.

Chapter 39

They stood outside for several minutes staring at the gentle waters of the Mediterranean. The sounds of the bird that floated on the breeze added to an overall beautiful experience. To the west the sun was lowering toward the horizon while a ship was barely visible in the distance. Harry had never seen such a exquisite sight in his life.

"Come, let us show you our 'ouse now 'Arry." Fleur said quietly as she took his hand. "And remember eet is your 'ome now."

Harry turned away from the sea and then stepped back in surprise. Having been blindfolded on the way out, he'd not seen the house itself and now Harry was stunned. The house was massive. Made of light colored stones worn smooth from time, it stood three stories high and stretched for at least a hundred and fifty feet. Numerous chimneys littered the steep roof while multitudes of windows were inlaid into the stone. From each corner of the house, the walls curved outward to form windowed circular rooms. A patio surrounded by a half stone wall topped with a black wrought-iron fence held several chairs arranged around a large pool of shimmering clear water.

"Wow." Harry murmured as he tried to see the whole building.

"Welcome 'ome 'Arry." Gabrielle said as she took his other hand.

"What do you zink?" Alain Delacour asked when the bonded walked into the back veranda doors.

"Its...its...wow." Harry could only say.

"I'll take it zat you like ze view zen?" Alain remarked with a smile. "In a few days we'll take ze boat out, but first we'll get you settled in."

"I am planning on a shopping trip to Marseilles on Wednesday so don't plan on zen." Apolline told her husband. She looked at the teens. "Start thinking of the things you need."

"I need a bikini." Gabrielle said. "I promised 'Arry I would wear one for 'im."

Apolline smiled as she glanced at the blushing young man. "I zink we can get you one in Marseilles. We'll all go and make it a full day of shopping. If you find you need one tomorrow you can wear one of Fleur's older ones. I'm sure Kessy will make it fit if you need 'er too."

"Kessy is one ze 'ouse-elves." Fleur explained to Harry and Hermione.

"Speaking of house-elves, did Dobby and Winky arrive?"

"Oui, but do not call zem for a while. Zey are still settling in and zen zey will need to learn ze 'ouse and land." Apolline replied. "Eet will be good to let ze elves get to know each other. Our elves are going to resent zem for a short time but it will pass."

"Resent Dobby and Winky?" Hermione asked. "Why?"

"Because zey will insist on taking care of all of you." Apolline replied. "Including Fleur and Gabrielle. Our elves 'ave been taking care of zem since ze day zey were born."

"Do we need to help with that?" Hermione asked. "I mean we can talk to Dobby and Winky and have them gradually take over or just share."

"Non, it will be fine." Alain replied. "Zey will learn to work together. It is best to let zem work it out, but I will keep an eye on zem to make sure zey do. If zey 'ave trouble, zen we'll let you deal with eet."

"We prepared ze room across ze 'all from yours for 'Arry." Apolline said to Fleur. "While 'Ermione 'as ze one across from yours." She was now looking at Gabrielle. "Now why don't you show 'Arry and 'Ermione ze 'ouse and zeir rooms but don't take too long, I zink it is almost time for dîner."

Fleur and Gabrielle had described parts of their home to Harry the night of their 'get to know each other' dinner, but their descriptions were mostly of parts and never really mentioned the scale of the home. The whole of the place far eclipsed the described parts. He and Hermione found themselves staring wide-eyed at the portraits and decorations.

"This is more like a museum than a home." Hermione mentioned as they walked up the grand curving staircase toward the second floor.

"Oui, some parts are, but it 'as been in Papa's family for generations." Fleur replied. "Besides eet keeps ze 'ouse-elves very 'appy in keeping it clean."

"I can imagine."

"Zere are five bedrooms on zis floor." Fleur indicated with a sweep of her arm when they made it to the second floor. "Maman and Papa's room is down zat way." She pointed down a hallway "and down zere is Papa's office for when 'e works at 'ome. She moved to the next set of steps that lead further up. "Gabrielle and I 'ave our bedrooms on ze zird floor."

"Isn't it hot up there?" Hermione asked.

Fleur smiled at her bondsister. "Remember zis is a magical 'ousehold. 'Ave you not noticed zere 'as been no change of temperature in ze 'ouse? Zere are temperature control runes in almost every room. I will show you 'ow to change ze runes if you want it 'otter or colder in your rooms. You can even open your windows and it will not get too 'ot."

"Really?" Hermione asked. "Where are the runes?" She started looking around for anything with known runes on them.

"You see zis?" Fleur asked as she pointed at what looked like a common light switch at the second floor landing. It was situated next to a vase that stood on a table. "When you move it up and down, eet shifts a rune set behind ze plate zat controls ze lights."

Hermione hadn't even thought of the incongruity of the light switch in a magical house. "It looks just like a muggle one."

"Oui and zere are similar zings around and I will show zem to you." By now they had reached the third floor. "My room is at ze end." Fleur said as she started down the east wing. She opened the door at the end on the right and led everyone into a very large room.

Fleur's bedroom was painted light blue with white trim while floor was a dark walnut hardwood with several rugs scattered in various

spots. A four poster bed sat on one side, while a dresser and several bookshelves were on the other. Windows lined the whole south side of the room. From those windows you could see the same bluff and sea. There was an opening at the far right side of the room that led into a small circular room filled with more windows.

"It's as beautiful as its owner." Harry said to his eldest bondmate as he wrapped his arms around her waist.

Fleur leaned back into his embrace and smiled. Then she remembered that had to finish the tour soon. "Zis," She led Harry and Hermione into the circular turret room, "is where I like to sit and read when eet's raining." Everyone eyes were turned westward as the sun was lowering toward the sea filled horizon.

Fleur next opened a door in her room that opened into a very large walk-in closet. Rows of clothes were displayed. "Ermione, you are more zan welcome to any of zese zings if zey fit you." she looked at her sister. "You too Gabrielle, but I zink Maman is planning on buying you a new wardrobe on Wednesday." She closed the closet and open another door on the same wall. "Gabrielle and I share zis bathroom."

The bathroom was large, but not opulent. A long counter held two sinks, while a two person tub sat under a large window, next to it was a full walk in shower.

"Zere will be a similar bathroom between your rooms." Fleur said. "Want to switch rooms with me 'Ermione? You can 'ave my reading room and I get to share a bathroom with 'Arry?"

"Are we really going to be sleeping with Harry here?" Hermione asked. "I mean your parents..."

"Will 'ave no trouble wiz it." Fleur assured her. Then seeing the look in Hermione's eyes, she continued. "My parents understand ze permanence of ze bond. Even your mother only protested because of your father."

"And your father already recognizes what's going to happen...eventually." Harry added. He'd now wrapped his arms around Hermione. "Remember when he gave me the lecture at Hogwarts? The one you all thought was funny?"

"Of course."

"At the golf course he told me that it was a couple of weeks later that he realized he'd given me the how-to manual for his own daughter." Harry said with a grin. "I'm not allowed to talk to him about sex ever again."

"He said that?" Hermione asked incredulously.

"Yes he did. Though he did have a point."

"Oui," Fleur said, "but when ze time does come, I zink 'ands on demonstrations will be much better zan manuals, non?" She emphasized her point by running her hand over Harry's chest.

"Am I going to need this shower soon?" Harry growled at Fleur. "As in a cold one?"

"Go ahead." Hermione replied with a shrug. "We'll wait. We don't mind seeing you with no clothes."

"Non, no shower, come see my room." Gabrielle pulled Harry toward the other door in the bathroom.

"Are you sure you want to show 'im eet now?" Fleur asked her sister with a raised eyebrow.

"Why wouldn't I?" Gabrielle asked her sister.

"Ze last time I saw your room, zere were a lot of zings 'anging on your wall."

"Oh là là" Gabrielle eyes widened as her face flushed red. "Non, Fleur is right. We should see your rooms now." She started back toward Fleur's room. "I'll show you mine tomorrow."

"What is it?" Harry asked as his curiosity rose. He was tempted to peek in her mind but waited to see if she'd tell him.

"Nozing important." Gabrielle tried a wave of dismissal, but it was obvious that Harry was now too curious to let it go. Gabrielle sighed. "Oui, remember I 'ad a crush on someone who looks amazingly like

you." Gabrielle paused before continuing. She looked shyly at her bondmate. "Not you of course, but ze boy-who-lived-to-love-Gabrielle."

By now Harry had pulled Gabrielle into his arms. "Well I don't know about the person you had a crush on, but I know I did live to love Gabrielle. I told my parents I wanted to come back just so I could be with the women I love." He raised a hand and caressed her cheek and then followed that with a kiss.

Gabrielle closed her eyes at the touch of his fingers and lips. "It is so much better zan any dream I ever 'ad. I don't 'ave zat 'ero of books and posters, I 'ave my 'ero."

"We need to keep moving if we're going to have dinner." Fleur said interrupting the two after a minute.

When Gabrielle led them into her room, they found themselves in a room painted pale green with beige trim. The floor in her room also was a dark walnut with several rugs. She didn't have the round room but she did have many windows looking out over the sea. A comfortable chair sat under one of those windows. The walls were covered in moving posters of Harry Potter and a whole section of wall was covered in newspaper clippings of the boy-who-lived. Gabrielle's face turned red as she looked at Harry. "I know zis is not you now, and is not ze person I am in love and bonded wiz."

Harry looked around the room and shook his head slightly at the collection of pictures and posters before he turned to Gabrielle. "I know. How about we make our own pictures to replace these? We can take pictures of all of us together and some of just you and me over the summer."

"I'd like zat." Gabrielle replied. "Zese will go away tonight."

"They did serve a purpose though."

"Zey did?"

"If you hadn't had a crush on who you thought I was, you might not have come to Hogwarts. If you hadn't come, I wouldn't be in love with you now." Harry explained. "And though I'd never want you in danger again, I am very glad the way things worked out."

"Oui," Gabrielle murmured in the inches that now separated them. "I am too." The inches ceased to exist as their lips found each other.

"If you two don't stop kissing all the time, we'll never finish." Fleur laughed playfully. "Come, let us see your room." She pulled Harry away from her sister and led him out the door of Gabrielle's room. She guided him to the door across the hall from her own room. "This is your room." She said to Harry and opened the door.

The room was laid out in mirror image of Fleur's. The room had a slight sterile feel to it as the walls were white and there were only sparse pictures on the wall. A bed was against one wall while a dresser was against another. There was a table under a couple of the windows.

"The elves will paint it any color you want." Fleur said when they entered.

"Mmm..." Harry replied but obviously wasn't listening. He had noticed the table under the window where the plans and pictures from his parents' vault were laid out and was walking over to it.

The girls followed and surrounded him as he looked down at the table.

"It was nice for your father to put this here." Harry said as he looked at his mother's handwriting.

"He cares about you." Fleur said gently. "He already sees you as a son, and someday," She lifted her left hand and fingered her engagement ring, "you truly will be."

"Even not just us who are your family." Gabrielle added. "Our family is now your family as well."

"And mine as well." Hermione said. "My mother and father like you."

Harry glanced at the faces of his bondmates and realized the truth of what they were saying. There were others who truly cared about him. He wasn't sure how to reply, finally he swallowed and nodded. "We should finish the tour." He said to change the subject. Then he remembered the letter the solicitor had given him from his mother.

He took it out of his pocket and laid it on the table. "I'll read this tomorrow."

"Are you sure?" Hermione asked. "We can wait."

Harry nodded again. "I...I'm fine. I just want to have time when I do read it."

"Of course."

"Shall we see your room?"

"Since you are sharing a bathroom with 'im," Fleur said to Hermione with a smile, "eet is up to you to start training 'im now."

"Train me?" Harry asked suddenly suspicious. "How exactly do I need to be trained?"

"Toilet seat down!" Hermione replied. "No peeing on the floor."

"Nor ze shower."

"Put away the stuff you get out."

"Flush ze toilet."

"And don't leave your underwear on ze floor." Fleur said to finish off the list.

"I think you need to send a thank you note to my aunt then." Harry said with a hint of humor. "All this time I thought she was being mean but she's really been training me for this time with you."

Each of the young ladies eyed Harry with concern. Afraid they may have upset him, they reached out but all they could feel from him was his love.

"Non." Fleur finally said. "Your tante is not someone I will ever say zank you to."

"Let's go see Hermione' bedroom." Harry said to break the seriousness turn the conversation had taken.

"Oui." Fleur replied. "But before we go, do you want ze color of ze walls changed?"

"Want them to be Gryffindor colors?" Hermione asked as she looked around. "Red and gold would be nice."

Harry looked at his bondmates and instantly knew the exact colors he wanted. "No," He replied to Fleur, "I'd like the walls to be light blue; the color of Gabrielle and your eyes and the trim to be almond brown to match your eyes Hermione."

"Then I want my walls to be emerald..." Hermione started but then she glanced outside for the first time. "green." she finished in a murmur. Harry's and her windows were on the north side or front of the house so they faced away from the sea. Stretching out before their windows were perfectly manicured flower gardens and hedges grown and trimmed in intricate patterns. Pathways of bricks led amongst the gardens with a few benches scattered in shaded spots. A wide driveway bisected the hedges and circled in front of the house. It too was made of bricks. "It's beautiful." She gasped.

"Tonny likes to do ze lawn." Gabrielle explained as their attention turned to what was outside the window.

"Another house-elf?" Hermione asked.

"Oui."

"Maybe Dobby can help him."

"I'm sure he will make some interesting patterns if we let him." Harry said wryly.

"Yes, he'll make a hedge shaped like you, I'm sure." Hermione laughed.

"Right in ze middle." Gabrielle said pointing. "It can be right there."

"Uh...no thank you." Harry said quickly. He could just see a larger than life version of himself standing in the middle of the garden with Dobby looking up at it proudly.

"But it could be the largest hedge sculpture out there." Hermione laughed.

Harry just shook his head as he looked back at the rest of his room. "I think I'd like pictures of all of you for my walls and...and one of that tower in Paris."

"Ze Eiffel Tower?"

"Yes and maybe that lily flower design." Harry added.

"Oui, we can do zat." Gabrielle said.

Harry smiled then crossed the room to his bed. "Why is my bed bigger than yours?" He asked. His bed was twice as big as Fleur's and Gabrielle's.

"Now do you believe me when I say my maman and papa are not going to mind us sleeping together?" Fleur asked Hermione as she nodded at the bed. "Zat bed used to be ze same size as mine and Gabrielle's. Now it is large enough for all of us to sleep in together if we wanted."

"I will be the last to complain about sleeping with Harry." Hermione offered as she climbed onto the bed. "Though one half the size would be better, we'd have to sleep closer."

"Just remember zat tonight is my night."

"I know, but tomorrow it will be mine." Hermione replied as she bounced a little on the mattress and then laid back. "Oh, this bed is comfortable."

"Come sister." Fleur said offering her a hand. "Let's see your room before dinner."

A surprise waited for Hermione as she entered her room. Lying in the middle of her bed was a large abundance of orange fur.

"Crookshanks?" Hermione gasped. "I didn't know you were coming." The part Kneazle opened his eyes and yawned his acknowledgment to their presence. He lazily eyed the four teens for only a second and then laid his head back down and went back to sleep.

Fleur shrugged when Hermione looked questioningly at her. "Obviously Crookshanks wanted to come."

It was then a house-elf appeared beside them. "Le dîner est servi mesdemoiselles, monsieur."

Fleur turned to Harry. "Dinner is ready." She turned back to the elf. "Nous descendons tout de suite. Merci, Kessy."

"Oui mademoiselle." The elf said.

"Zat was Kessy. I told 'er we're coming."

"Guess I better learn French." Harry said with a sigh. "As well as everything else."

"Speaking of French, we really need to decide soon on if we're going back to Hogwarts or not." Hermione stated. "If it's Hogwarts we have homework that needs to be done and Harry needs to work more on runes; if it's going to be Beauxbatons then we really need to learn French as quickly as possible and then work on catching up to where we need to be before the school year starts."

"What do you want?" Harry asked the three witches.

"I told you I want you to be happy." Hermione replied immediately.

"I'll be happy anywhere I'm with you." Harry said as his eyes met all three of his bondmates.

"I...I liked 'aving friends." Gabrielle said hesitantly after no one said anything for several seconds. "Ginny and Luna were nice to me."

"I'm not sure what I'd do when you're at Beauxbatons." Fleur added. "I would probably only get to see you ever so often. Ze offer from Dumbledore was enticing because it would allow us to be together."

Harry looked at Hermione who was biting her lower lip finally she added her own thoughts. "I'm comfortable at Hogwarts. I know the professors and next year is our OWL year, but I truly mean that I want you to be happy."

"I think we'll all be happier being together." Harry said earnestly. "I especially don't like the idea of Fleur not being with us at Beauxbatons." Again his eyes met those of his bondmates. "So Hogwarts?"

Slowly the three witches all started nodding.

"Then let's tell Dumbledore and McGonagall as soon as we can. I'm sure the Headmaster will breathe easier."

The Delacours had a huge formal dining room, but they preferred to have their family meals in a much cozier area. Ten minutes later they were gathered around a table that could be expanded to sit from four to eight people. Before each person was a plate filled with smoked swordfish served over a bed of rice covered in a tangy salsa. A side of peas and mushrooms in a butter sauce along with two types of cheese and several breads rounded out the meal. A white wine complemented the food.

"Now I wish to know more of zis proposal?" Madam Delacour asked when they were well into the meal. The story of the visit to Godric's Hollow was told. Her husband had conveyed most of it to Apolline, but listening to the teens tell it brought the emotions that existed during the time in the graveyard very much alive. She could see the happiness in her daughters' eyes.

"Let me see your rings again." Apolline said when the story was completed. She examined each one more carefully this time. "Why are zese stones different?" She asked as she pointed at the colored gems next to the diamonds.

"Zey are ze birthstones of ze bondsisters." Fleur explained. "Ze engagement and commitments are for all of us and we wanted our rings to reflect eet. Ze larger diamond is ze connection and love to 'arry while ze others show our commitment to our sisters."

"Oh." Apolline said. "Zat was very zoughtful." She looked over at the young man who was trying to act like nothing important had happened. "Well 'Arry, it looks like you've once again made our daughters 'appy."

"I...I was just, well I told you I wanted them, I mean us to be a family."

"So you did. Do you 'ave an actual date in mind?"

"Not soon Maman." Fleur replied. "Zough we 'aven't discussed it yet."

"Just try to let us know when you decide." Apolline said with a smile. "And where you would like it to be."

"Here." Harry said firmly. "When we do get married, it has to be on the bluff overlooking the sea." Harry looked over at Fleur. "At least that is where I want to marry Fleur."

Fleur smiled at Harry as the two of them locked gazes.

"So individual weddings?" Apolline finally said when the two of them had gazed for some time.

"We really don't know yet maman." Fleur replied though she was still looking into Harry's eyes. "My sisters and I will need to figure all of zat out, but we 'ave time."

"Zen what about ze bond?" Apolline asked next. "When do you want to announce eet?"

"We need to find out when Skeeter can get here to do her story on Gabrielle." Hermione explained "Two maybe three weeks? Anybody want to guess how's she's going to react to the bond story?"

"Like Christmas has come early and she got all the gifts." Harry replied and the others agreed.

"And your birthday 'Arry?" Apolline continued on. "What would you like to do on eet?"

"Uh...I don't know." Harry replied truthfully with a shrug of his shoulders. Even after starting Hogwarts he'd never done anything special for his birthday.

"I want zis birthday to be extra special so what's ze best birthday you've ever 'ad?" Apolline asked kindly. "Maybe zat will give me an idea."

"Maman." Fleur said pointedly and shook her head.

"No, it's alright, but thank you." Harry replied as he again looked at his bondmate. "Actually I've never done anything on my birthday except the day Hagrid took me to Diagon Alley when I first learned I was a wizard." He looked at his bondmates. "The past is the past, this is my future."

"Well zis year eet will be special. I will get with my daughters and we'll zink of somezing." Apolline said.

The dinner finished with a dessert of apple tart tatin.

Apolline could see the fatigue in the young teens faces as they finished. "Now why don't you go settle into your rooms and turn in early. It's been a long day for you."

"We still 'aven't shown 'Ermione ze library." Fleur replied with a glint in her eyes as she looked at her bondsister.

"Library?" Hermione asked as she looked back at Fleur hungrily. "You have a library? Why didn't you say so."

"Oui we do." Fleur replied as she led them out of the smaller dining room. "Zough you'll need to brush up on your French since most of ze book are in zat language but we 'ave over forty-six zousand books. As for why? We'd still be in zere if I'd told you of it first."

"Forty-six..." Hermione whispered as they entered a room filled with shelves of books. She ran her fingers over the spines of the nearest books. "Can I?" She asked as she looked at Fleur.

"Of course. Papa is serious when 'e says zis is your 'ome as well now." Fleur replied. "You can take any book you want. Zey are your books as well."

"I..I can't think like that. I know your father is very nice but..."

"But what?" Fleur asked. "Some day zis will be ours anyway. Yours, mine, Gabrielle and 'Arry's."

"What? Why do you say that?"

"I told you zis 'ome 'as been in my father's family for generations. We will be ze next generation non? Whether we live 'ere or not, it will be ours. Papa 'as mentioned several times 'e'd like to move to Paris. I zink in a few years 'e'll pass it on down to us like 'is father did to 'im."

"But..." Hermione stopped as her mind tried to absorb the possibility of living in such grandeur.

"Eet is not somezing we 'ave to worry about now. Take a book and let's go to bed." Fleur said. "We'll discuss it another time. For now, I want to curl up and sleep in 'Arry's arms."

"Go ahead." Hermione murmured. "I'll go to bed soon." She was walking slowly as she read the titles of the various books.

"Go on Fleur." Gabrielle told her sister as she rolled her eyes playfully. "I'll drag 'er out of 'ere sometime tonight..." She paused for a couple of seconds before finishing, "maybe."

Fleur took Harry's arm and the two of them left the library. As they started to climb the steps Fleur asked. "Do you mind if we don't sleep in your bed tonight."

"Why? I mean of course, but I thought you told..."

"Oh, I don't mean not to sleep together." Fleur said as she took Harry's hand. "I..I just would like for us to sleep in my bed tonight. It's more personal for me I guess." She shrugged. "If we open ze windows we can 'ear ze sounds of ze sea. I've missed zat sound sometimes." The last was said with a sigh.

"Of course love. I'd love to sleep in your bed." Harry replied.

Fleur smiled as they stepped onto the second floor landing.

"But you know what I really want to do?" Harry asked.

"What?"

"This." Harry replied as he playfully grabbed Fleur around the waist and guided her gently until her back was against the wall. As he pressed his body firmly against hers, his lips started at the base of her neck and worked their way up until he found her mouth. He gently bit at her lower lip as he knew she liked and then again, slightly sucking it into his mouth this time. His lips then moved in a tantalizing slow line along her jawline, lightly kissing every inch of the way until he came to her perfect ear. He snagged the lobe between his teeth and nibbled gently.

A low moan escaped Fleur's lips.

Harry inwardly smiled at the response and what he felt in their bond. He started slowly kissing his way lightly down her neck until he found the spot at her shoulder. As he pressed his body more firmly against her, he felt more than heard the next moan as she move her head slightly to offer easier access to her neck.

Fleur loved the confidence her bondmate was now showing in their relationship. The shyness had disappeared and the gentle physical aggressiveness he showed on occasions had her melting into his hands and kisses. At that moment she was lost to the feeling of his lips, teeth, and warm breath on her her. Soon his lips were back on hers and their tongues started a dance they were both familiar with. This kiss was far less gentle.

"Do be careful of ze vase." A female voice said from behind them. "You're close to knocking it off ze table."

Harry instantly backed away from Fleur and looked around into the amused faces of the elder Delacours. His face turned scarlet in an instant.

"Don't mind us." Alain said with a twinkle in his eye. He nodded to a spot next to Harry. "But Apolline likes zat vase." The nod made Harry look down and he saw a table next to them with a medium sized vase resting on it.

"Maybe I should put a sticking charm on eet?" Apolline said to her husband. "Just in case zey wish to continue?"

"No need, we're going to bed Maman, Papa." Fleur said as she tried to control her breathing. "Bonne nuit."

"Goodnight to you as well dear." Apolline replied still in a tone of merriment. "And you too 'Arry." She moved closer to the teens and first kissed her daughter and then then kissed Harry on his cheek.

Alain kissed his daughter as well and still with a merry twinkle in his eyes, held out his hand to Harry who shook it. "Don't be embarrassed 'Arry. We are just 'appy our daughters and you are 'appy. If we tease you, it's all in good 'umor."

"Yes sir." Harry replied as Fleur took his hand and pulled him up the steps.

"What about my clothes?" Harry asked as he stopped near their bedrooms. "Do I have anything to sleep in?"

"I'm sure ze elves would 'ave put zem away, but if not, you don't need any to sleep with me."

Fleur followed him into his room where he found his clothes had been put away. He grabbed a pair of boxers and sleep pants and turned to Fleur. "I'll take a quick shower and be there shortly." Harry said.

"You could always take a shower wiz me." Fleur said suggestively as she started to take her shirt off.

"No...no that would not be a good idea." Harry replied. "Unless you want it very very cold."

"Do you desire me?" Fleur asked in a low husky voice as she stood within inches of him; Her breasts rubbing against his chest.

Harry swallowed before answering. "You know I do."

"Good." Fleur replied in a more playful voice as she gave him a peck on his lips and turned toward the door. "Zen we are even for zat kiss earlier. I will be having a cold shower as well."

Harry stared after her as she gracefully strode toward the door. When she got there, she turned back. "But I really liked ze kiss."

"I love you my flower." Harry said.

"Moi aussi, je t'aime."

"You love me, but what was the other?"

"Just saying I love you too." Fleur replied. "Now go take your shower."

Fifteen minutes later they were lying in the bed with moon light streaming through the open window. The gentle sounds of the small waves of the sea lapping at the shore could be heard as well as crickets and other nightly sounds. Harry was spooned behind Fleur with one arm holding her while the other was under her pillow.

"Ze last time I slept in zis bed, I wondered what ze future 'ad for me." Fleur said softly. "I was starting my last year at school with no real friends and really didn't know what I wanted to do."

"And now?" Harry murmured into her hair and he kissed her softly on her neck.

"And now I'm 'appier zan I ever zought I could be." Fleur replied. After a few seconds she sighed contently. "Sharing zis with you is...is special."

Harry held her a little more firmly in response and kissed her neck again.

Soon the sounds of the sea lulled their tired bodies and minds into a deep sleep.

**** E E ****

"Whatever you're selling we're not interested." Vernon Dursley said when he opened the door after the bell had rung six times in fast succession. There were two people on the doorstep, a young man and a young woman who were dressed in outlandish clothing. Vernon started to close the door and found he couldn't.

"May we see.." The young woman looked at a scroll in her hand, "The cupboard under the stairs and..." again she looked at the scroll, "the smallest bedroom?"

"WHAT?" Vernon exclaimed.

"This is Number Four Privet Drive? The previous home of Harry Potter?"

"YOU'RE FREAKS AREN'T YOU!" Vernon yelled and against tried to slam the door only to find it still would not budge.

"Oh excellent." The young man said to the young woman. "I know it said it was a fully interactive, but I never thought it would feel so real. He's yelling and everything."

"GET OUT!" Vernon thundered with spittle flying out of his mouth.

"That looks like genuine rage." The woman said to Vernon. "How long does it take to learn to turn that shade of purple? Is it some kind of spell?"

"Oh...wait." The man said referring to the scroll again. "It says if we want to see the rooms we have to bind him." He raised his wand. "Petrificus Totalus."

Vernon stopped with a fist raised. Slowly he tumbled to the right against a wall, where his stiff body slid to the floor with a thud.

"This is more fun that Godric's Hollow." The man said to the woman.

"Can...can I help you?" Petunia asked as she came into the room. She then saw her husband. "What...what did you do?"

"Just followed the instructions from our tour guide." The lady replied as she lifted the scroll for Petunia to see. "Do we suppose to bind you as well?"

Petunia saw the wands in their hands and all the warnings Alain Delacour mentioned came flashing back to her. "Uh..." She shook nervously. "Are you here to kill us?"

"Kill you? Oh goodness no." The man laughed.

"But...you're fre...I mean witch and wizard aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Harry doesn't live here anymore. He left and we don't know where he went though we think it's France."

"We know Harry doesn't live here now. It's right here." The young witch said and pointed to a spot in the scroll and read. "Harry Potter LIVED, " She stressed the word as if Petunia was unable to read, "at number four Privet Drive, Little Whinging in Surrey from the night his parents were murdered until July twelfth nineteen ninety-five. It doesn't say lives does it? It says LIVED."

"Then...then what do you want?"

"We're here for the tour of course. Did Godric's Hollow this morning and now here we are." The lady frowned. "He did live here didn't he? I'd hate to think we got ripped off."

"Uh..yes he did."

"Excellent. We'd like to see the cupboard under the stairs and the smallest bedroom please."

"Uh...ok." Petunia replied and led them to the door to the cupboard.

"This is where his evil Uncle and Aunt...oh would that be you?" The man asked.

"I...I guess." Petunia was starting to be really worried about her own sanity now.

"Oh excellent." The woman said with glee as she opened the door. She got on her knees and climbed into the cupboard. "Lock me in."

"Is there room for both of us?" the man asked. "Lock us both in." He said to Petunia with a smile as he tried to budge in with his wife.

It was a half hour later the Petunia was walking the odd couple to the front door. As they neared, the doorbell rang again. Petunia

opened the door and older woman and a young boy was standing there. Both were dressed in outlandish clothing.

"We're here for the tour..."

"Agatha is that you?" The young man said.

"Tilden? You beat us here?"

"We rushed over after the Hollow."

"How is it?" The older woman asked looking around the house.

"Well if you want the full experience, you'll need to unbind that gentleman." Tilden replied pointing at Vernon. "Just as the brochure says, turned purple, threatened us, everything. It was very exciting. If you'd like we can unbind him and you can come back."

"If you could, we'll go back and knock again."

The young couple turned to Petunia, "You have been most kind, but we sort of expected you to yell at us. Do you think you could, just so we can feel the real experience."

So began a most curious summer the Dursleys had ever had. Because of their lack of money, they could not leave for any vacation. Vernon tried everything to keep the magical people away, but they kept arriving. He and Dudley ended up being turned into eighteen different animals as well as magically hexed many, many times before the summer was over.

Petunia on the other started enjoying the visits. She even asked a couple of the visiting tourist to forward letters to Harry in care of Professor Dumbledore at Hogwarts. Ever since that night he'd let her use the invisibility cloak, she'd started to understand her sister more. She gotten back out the old family albums and start looking at them, remembering a time when she and Lily had been best friends when they were very young.

Chapter 40

** July 13 continued **

"Thank you for coming Albus." Amelia Bones said to the Hogwarts Headmaster who sat in a chair in front of her desk. She hadn't been surprised when he'd transfigured it into a more comfortable armchair before sitting down. "I know it's late but I wanted to discuss a few things."

"My pleasure as always Amelia." Replied Dumbledore. "What can I do for you?"

"First thing is Mr. Potter. Is he in France?" Amelia Bones asked.

"Yes, Alain sent word of their safe arrival a couple of hours ago." Dumbledore replied. "It seems they spent some time in Paris before continuing on to their home."

"Why?" Amelia asked. "Shouldn't they have gone directly to the Delacour's home?"

"I would have preferred that, but Alain assured me the teens were under surveillance from the French Aurors the entire time. Remember his daughters are in peril as well so I trust he was as concerned. As to why, it seems they had to do some shopping for engagement rings." Albus explained. "I understand that Mr. Potter is officially engaged."

"So soon? I mean I know about the bonding, but are they really thinking about marriage at their age?"

"I do not know. I have not been privy to that information." Dumbledore admitted with a shrug.

"Well it shall be interesting when news of the bonding comes out." Amelia commented.

"Yes, If I understand correctly they will make the bonding public in a couple of weeks."

"At least he seems to have the Prophet and especially Rita Skeeter on his side, though I have no idea how he accomplished that."

"From his willingness to give interviews to her, it seems they have come to some understanding." Dumbledore opined. "I do believe it was he or one of his girlfriends who gave Rita the idea of writing that article about Voldemort's first victim. Myrtle Henderson who is a ghost at the school."

"It was a very touching story." Amelia agreed. "Especially how she tied it back to Mr. Potter and his battling a Basilisk to avenge her death as well as save his friend. That does bring up another thing I wanted to discuss. Why was the Basilisk never reported to the Ministry. According to records, you only acknowledge it as ancient magic that caused the petrification two years ago."

"I did not want to instill panic with the parents and also it would have brought people wishing to see the Chamber to the school." Dumbledore explained. "There is only one person who can open the Chamber and that is Mr. Potter since it requires being a Parselmouth. Would you have required him to return to the chamber just to satisfy the Ministry's curiosity?"

"I see your point." Amelia replied. "What about now the story has broken, are people wanting to see it?"

"Of course, but again only Mr. Potter can open the Chamber so it isn't something I can accommodate." Dumbledore replied.

"When is he returning then?" Bones asked. "Are they going to wait until September first, or will they be back sooner?"

"I do not know Amelia." Albus replied truthfully. "It is possible that they won't return at all."

That answer took the head of the Magical Law Enforcement by surprise. "Why would you say that? Aren't they coming back to school?"

Dumbledore thought of the discord that had sprouted between him and the teens. Though he felt they had settled most of them, he still thought of the mistakes he had made when it came to the young man. "France and the Delacours have much to offer. Beauxbatons is definitely a possibility." Dumbledore said after he finally suppressed

the regrets. "After what has transpired they surely must be thinking of it."

"We'll provide as much protection as possible, if that's his concern." Bones stated.

"I truly don't think he will be concerned for himself, though for his girlfriends it might be a different matter." Dumbledore answered. "No, I do not think that will be the deciding factor in this case, it is more likely some injustices he is thinking of. You have to admit, the young man has suffered much. The Minister ignored him last year about Sirius and again after the tournament. The matter with Umbridge didn't help either."

"I know, but the Minister is bending over backward to appease Mr. Potter now. He knows where public opinion lies at the moment. If Mr. Potter wanted him to stand on his head in the fountain in the lobby he'd probably do it. He's even planning on honoring him with the Order of Merlin second class when he returns."

"I would advise Cornelius to include Fleur Delacour in that award if he really wants Harry to accept it. She risked her life to free Harry. In my opinion if she is snubbed, he'll refuse it. It would be better to not offer it at all if she isn't included."

Amelia thought on that for a few seconds. "You obviously know him better than I do, so I will pass that on."

"If I may make another suggestion, if Cornelius were to make the award known earlier than the bonding is announced, we might get a more favorable response to the bonding itself. The two heroes along with the two other people in the group bonding would play better with the populace than just Mr. Potter bonding to two Veelas and a muggleborn witch."

"I'll suggest it to Fudge." Amelia made a quick note on a parchment. "Do you think Potter would return for the presentation? And do you think it would influence him in returning to Hogwarts?"

"I do not know if he'll return for any ceremony, though I think an appeal to Minister Delacour might help. He'd understand the importance of the matter. As for influencing their returning to

Hogwarts, I think before you and Cornelius become too concerned about Mr. Potter not returning, I should point out that a couple of things have occurred that suggest to me they will be back. I have also made them an offer that I think will be too tempting for them to pass on especially now that they are officially engaged." When he saw Amelia waiting expectantly he explained. "Miss Granger received a very valuable book and desired it to be cared for by the Hogwarts' Librarian. That suggests she still feels a connection to the school. Also Harry has contacted us about taking Ancient Runes next year. Again it might be more of what if, but it does show that they are giving serious consideration to returning."

"Those are promising signs." Bones said as a sigh escaped her lips. "I feel it would be disastrous if they didn't return." She admitted as she thought of the ramifications if they should stay in France. "If word got out that Potter might be gone for good, we'd have a serious problem." Amelia shook her head at the thought before continuing. "We'd have riots and the people would be so demoralized You-Know-Who could just waltz in and take over without a fight."

"That I know." Albus replied. "And it's more serious than that." He continued to himself as he thought of the prophecy. "We can hope they make the right decision."

"Right for whom though?" Bones asked.

"For all concerned."

Amelia took a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Does Potter know what he means to the people?"

"Possibly. I definitely think Minister Delacour does and hopefully will be teaching Harry the political side of things. Though I should warn you that Harry does not care for all the attention and pushing him into such a role might be detrimental."

Amelia nodded. "I understand, but attention he will get no matter what. Hopefully Minister Delacour can help him understand that. Now about this offer you made?"

"It was to the eldest Delacour daughter, Fleur but affects them all. As you might know she graduated from Beauxbatons after this past year. I offered her a position at Hogwarts as a semi-official member

of the staff to assist the students who desire additional defense tutoring. I have to admit that outside of Remus Lupin, we've had less than stellar instructors in that position recently." Again Amelia nodded and Albus continued. "That would allow them to stay together. Miss Delacour would have private quarters and...well let's say I'd turn a blind eye toward any late night comings and goings as long as they are discreet. I also let it be known that both Mr. Potter and Miss Granger would be selected as prefects. That was not part of any offer as they are the two most deserving students in Gryffindor. There is also the fact that the two of them are entering their OWL year. Miss Granger will most definitely see how changing schools might affect those tests especially when there is a language issue to overcome."

"Hopefully that will be enough." Amelia replied. "When do you think you'll know?"

"If Fudge considers the Order of Merlin for Fleur, it would give me a reason to visit them in France and maybe get an idea. I can also ask them to make a decision more quickly because of the prefect status. If Minerva and I have to offer it to another pair we need some time to consider who it should be."

"I'll approach Fudge tomorrow." Amelia promised. "What if they have decided against returning?"

"Then I will do my best to convince them otherwise." Dumbledore assured her. "If it comes to that, it shall be a lively debate."

"I haven't known you to fail in many of those." Amelia remarked.

"You haven't argued with the four of them before. They are very protective of each other."

"Again you would know better. Now you mentioned your Defense class. Who will be teaching it this year? Mad-Eye?"

"No, after almost a year locked up in that trunk, he's taking the fight a little personally." Dumbledore replied with a sigh. "I'm still searching for someone to handle the class but it gets more and more difficult every year."

Amelia stared at the Hogwarts Headmaster for a few seconds before looking down at her desk and finding a piece of parchment. "Speaking of your instructors, I need to ask you about Severus Snape."

The kind grandfatherly look on Dumbledore's face disappeared instantly as his gaze sharpened. It was two seconds before he replied. "Understand Amelia that Severus has my utmost confidence."

"He is a Death Eater who responded to the call of You-Know-Who that night." Amelia said undeterred.

"I am very much aware of that." Dumbledore replied evenly.

"And you still trust him?"

"With my life Amelia. Severus went there on my request."

"Your..." Amelia started as her eyes widened but stopped as she glared at Dumbledore. "You plan on him spying for you again?" She immediately put the pieces together. "That means you have your Order going again doesn't it?"

"Amelia, I know of your opinions of the Order of the Phoenix, but they are clouded by the death of your brother."

A look of sadness crept into the eyes of the head of the Department of Law Enforcement. "Not just Edgar, they killed his wife and kids as well you know. All because of that damn club of yours."

"And what of the numerous people he saved? Amelia, you know the Ministry and even your own department is filled with Voldemort supporters. I have much to offer the fight, but I can not do it through the ministry."

"You say the Ministry is filled with sympathizers and you have a marked Death Eater?" Amelia asked as her voice rose in volume. "If Snape is on your side then why didn't You-Know-Who kill him when he showed up that night? It's in the records you said he was working for you."

"Severus can be...most convincing." Albus answered. "But that is all I will say."

Amelia bit the inside of her cheek to choke off a retort, finally she said. "I will be watching him closely and I don't mean just because he is a Death Eater. I spoke to my niece about him and it seems he is creating an atmosphere in your castle that is conducive to further Death Eater recruitment."

"I will not discuss my choice of instructors nor their methods Amelia." Dumbledore replied with a stern tone. "That is not under the purvey of the Ministry, especially the MLE. If there is something specific you have concerning Severus, I'll be glad to discuss it with you otherwise I bid you drop this inquiry."

"You'll be the second to know WHEN I do have something on the man Albus." Amelia said in a firm voice. "Until I AM satisfied the man is not aiding You-Know-Who I will treat him as any other identified Death Eater. Do I make myself clear?"

The two of them stared at each other for several seconds. Finally Dumbledore said. "Amelia, again I must stress that Severus has my deepest trust in these matters."

"That's your business Albus, not mine. To me he is a Death Eater until it is proven otherwise and as for your Phoenix organization, I know from history you probably have members of my Aurors, but if I find they are slacking on their duties to support you I will discipline them, am I understood?"

"Perfectly Amelia."

*** July 14th 1995 ***

"Arry...'Arry?" A soft female voice said gently.

"Mmmmm" murmured Harry Potter from the depths of a wonderful dream.

"Wake up love." The voice said again as soft lips touched lightly on his cheek.

Harry's eyes slowly opened as unfamiliar sounds cascaded into his mind. Strange birds were crying out while the sound of waves gently hitting the shore could be heard. A blurred vision of beauty was in front of him as his eyes finally focused as best they could.

"I want to show you something beautiful." Fleur said softly.

"You already have, you." Harry replied. "Can I go back to sleep now?"

"Non," Fleur said with a soft laugh as she leaned to kiss him again. She then slowly reached past him, her long hair caressing his face and her firm breasts moving over his body as she picked up something from the table next to his bed.

Harry reached his arms around her and pulled her to him.

"Non love." Fleur giggled as she give him a quick peck on the lips. "Old me as ze sun rises." She handed Harry his glasses and climbed out of bed.

Harry put on his glasses and turned to watch his oldest bondmate. The move of her hips as she walked away was graceful and sexy.

"Sunrise 'Arry, not my rear." Fleur said but smiled to herself. It was different to be admired by a man she knew loved her for more than her physical beauty. As last night and previous nights had shown, Harry's shyness toward her and her bond sisters was disappearing and the confident man that had always hid inside his eyes was emerging.

"You have your idea of beauty, I have mine." Harry replied cheekily as he climbed out of bed and followed Fleur into her windowed circular room. She was already standing in front of one of the windows looking east as the golden light of the newly appearing sun was giving distant clouds a multitude of colors. Harry moved her silky smooth hair aside as he lightly touched his lips to her neck before he settled his chin upon her shoulder and wrapped his arms around her waist.

Without words or even thoughts, they watched the sun inch its way over the horizon. Finally when the orange orb rested on the endless

horizon of the sea Fleur turned and wrapped her arms around Harry's neck. "I love you 'Arry Potter."

"And I love you Fleur Delacour...ma Fleur du Matin."

"I remember ze first morning you called me zat." Fleur said quietly as she was caught in the depth of Harry's green eyes. "I actually zought of zis, dreamed of zis, of being 'eld by you as we watched ze sunrise together and you saying zat. I...I only 'oped zen zat you would love me as I loved you."

"I do love you." Harry replied as he leaned forward and kissed her tenderly. Then when the kiss ended he smiled. "I love you enough to wake up early and watch a sunrise with you."

"Definitely true love zen, non?" Fleur asked with her mischievous smile. "Shall you go back to bed now?"

Harry took another look out the window at the sun that was now barely above the horizon and then back at Fleur. "How about a walk instead? I do believe someone mentioned a beach?"

"Oui, I'd like zat, but we should see if Gabrielle and 'Ermione are awake and would like to join us."

"They aren't." Harry answered immediately. "They're still sleeping, but before we go wake them up can you tell me how..." He paused before lowering his voice to almost a whisper, "how do I say flower of my heart?"

Fleur's blue eyes stared into Harry's green for a few seconds more before she whispered demurely. "Eets Fleur de mon coeur."

"That's you then, Fleur de mon coeur, the flower of my heart." Harry said. "You're like a field of flowers bringing sunshine to my heart."

Fleur's smile grew a little larger as silence fell between them for a couple of seconds. "You know your name is from 'Enry? Which actually means 'ome ruler from it's German roots?"

"No...really?" Harry answered. "Ruler? As in King?"

"Oui." Fleur replied. "Zat means you must be ze King of my..." then the twinkle showed in her eyes as she continued "pots non? Or at least my dishes? I mean you are my King Potter oui?"

"Fleur?"

"Oui?" Fleur asked with a grin.

"Are you ticklish?"

"Non...Non...Non." Fleur squealed as Harry picked her up and carried her to the bed, where he found out she actually was very ticklish, but then again Fleur found out Harry was also. It was ten minutes later before the squeals of laughter finally died away and the two climbed out of bed to go on their walk.

Neither Hermione nor Gabrielle were ready to be awakened since Hermione didn't leave the library until well after midnight, so Harry and Fleur were descending steps that led down onto a beach alone a short time later. The beach was about a hundred and fifty yards long and thirty yards deep from the bluffs. On either side of the beach were piles of rocks about twenty feet high that stretched from the bluffs to the sea, effectively walling off the beach area.

"It's beautiful." Harry said as he sat upon one of the chairs surrounding a table with a large umbrella over it. "Does anyone else come here?" He asked as he unlaced his trainers.

"Non, zis is our land. Ze beach was actually magically created by my arriere-grand-pere, I mean my great-grandfizzer." Fleur explained as she took Harry's hand and they started walking in the soft wet sands where the cool water lapped at their feet. "It 'as muggle repelling and unviewable wards on eet. Even if a boat were to come within a hundred meters of 'ere, zey could not see ze beach or anyone swimming. Zere are even wards to prevent larger fish from coming within a hundred meters, so you don't have to worry about sharks zough you still need to watch out for ze méduse."

"What's a méduse?" Harry asked suddenly looking down at the water waiting for something to attack him.

"Ze english call zem jellyfish."

"Jellyfish?" Harry asked. "What are they and are they dangerous?"

"Oui, zere stings can be very painful." Fleur explained. "But don't worry I'll protect you. I'll zrow myself in front of one if eet comes near you."

Harry stopped and looked sharply at Fleur. Their eyes met for a few seconds before Harry asked hesitantly. "Are you ok with that now?"

Fleur's eyes moved from Harry's as she looked out at the sea for a few seconds before she turned back to him and replied, "I'm 'appy we are both alive, but I'll never forget eet." Fleur shrugged. "Zough zose were ze worst seconds of my life, eet will do no good to pretend zey didn't 'appen."

Harry looked at the older witch, watched her hair blow in the stiffening morning breeze as a silent understanding again passed between them. Finally he took her hand and they started walking again, both deep in contemplation. "So what do these jellyfish look like?" Harry asked finally.

"Blobs of goo with tentacles 'anging down." Fleur replied with a laugh. "Ze most common here are small blue and purple ones." She visualized the ones she had seen floating on the surf and sent it to him.

"They are small." Harry remarked.

"Oui, but do not take zem lightly, zeir stings are painful."

"How often do they come?"

"Not often." Fleur replied. "At least not right now. Every few years a lot of zem will show up, but mostly ze last couple of years zere 'ave been very few of zem."

They continued discussing jellyfish and other fish that come into the waters as they walked along the beach. She showed him memories of her swims underwater and what it was like.

"We'll have to all try the bubblehead charm and swim under the water." Harry suggested.

"Papa can get us Gillyweed if you'd prefer zat." Fleur replied.

"As long as Hermione and Gabrielle aren't tied up underwater, it doesn't matter." Harry replied. "What about you and your magic underwater. Dumbledore mentioned that if you practiced using it underwater it might get better."

"If we 'ave time I might, we'll see when Marl comes."

"Do we know when he'll get here?"

"E wasn't expecting us to be 'ere until ze weekend since we were suppose to be still at your aunt's."

"Harry." Hermione's voice came through thirty minutes later. "Hedwig's back."

"You're awake are you?" Harry smirked.

"Barely, going down to get coffee now." Hermione replied as she yawned. "Professor Berceau would like to come later in the week to personally see us. Think it would be all right? I can dash off a quick note and see if Hedwig wants to take another journey."

"I'll ask Fleur."

"Hermione is awake." Harry said to Fleur. "Professor Berceau wants to come later in the week. Can we invite her?"

"You don't have to ask." Fleur replied. "Zis is your 'ome as well now."

"I couldn't..."

Fleur's face flashed as Harry felt a wave of frustration from her. "YES you can. I will starting ignoring you ze next time you say somezing like zat." She huffed. "I'm serious. Zis is YOUR 'ome 'Arry, eet is 'Ermione's 'ome. Until you start acting like it, I'm not going to believe you want to share it wiz me and Gabrielle."

Harry held up his hands in protest. "It's just so much so soon love." He replied as he pulled the older French witch into his arms. "We just got here last night and though I appreciate everything your

father, you and Gabrielle have given me, I need time to absorb it. I..I've never had a home."

Fleur sighed as tenderness came into her eyes. "I..know and I'm sorry for zat. I do 'ave a temper."

"So I've heard, especially before your morning coffee." Harry grinned. "Hagrid said he was going to get me some dragon hide for my cloak."

Fleur's eyes regained their twinkle of amusement. "And do you zink you need eet?"

"I think someday I'll do something really stupid and will wish I had it." Harry laughed.

Fleur returned the laugh as she pushed Harry toward the steps. "I just let 'Ermione know to invite ze Professor. Now let's go get my coffee before I 'ave to really show you my temper."

They found Hermione and Gabrielle sitting at the table with Apolline.

"Good morning you two." Apolline said as she looked up from the newspaper she was reading. "Ave you told 'Arry it is le quatorze juillet? La Fête Nationale?" She asked Fleur.

"Oui Maman. Well Gabrielle told 'im when she explained why we needed ze rings yesterday." Fleur answered as she gave her mother a kiss on the cheek before she saw the confused look on Harry's face. "Ze fourteenth of July, Ze National celebration or as Gabrielle said yesterday Bastille day."

"I am glad you came back early." Apolline said. "Without you two 'ere I wasn't going to have our family celebration dinner, but now we can. I've already told everyone to come tonight and zey all are looking forward to meeting you two." The last was to Harry and Hermione. "Especially ma mère."

"She knows?"

"About your bond?" Apolline asked. "Of course. We contacted 'er when ze bond was...uncertain. Zen of course we 'ad to tell 'er ze outcome. Zis was also before you asked us to keep it quiet, so she

also already knows about you 'Ermione." The last was said almost apologetically to Hermione.

"Eets alright." Fleur responded for the group. "We will be annoucing it soon anyway. So who else will be 'ere?"

"Aunt Berdine."

"She's the one who bought the..." Harry started.

"Yes who bought your basilisk 'ides." Apolline replied. "She's not really my soeur, but since we were both half-veela growing up, we went zrough ze hard times together, so she is like my sister. Marl might be 'ere by zen."

At that name all the bondmates looked at each other but didn't say anything.

"Sirius said he'd be here also." Apolline added

"Sirius?" Harry asked.

"Yes zough 'e did say 'e might be a little late. 'E 'ad something 'e wanted to take care of first." Apolline replied.

"What about Moony?" Harry asked.

"Doubtful." This came from Hermione causing Harry to look questioningly at her. "It was a full moon last night Harry." She explained further.

"It was?" Harry asked and at the confirmation nod, he sighed. "I should have known."

"I'm sorry, I thought you did. It was the only reason I could see that would have had Mr. Delacour asking him to start work yesterday when Peter had to go through the Veil. Especially with today being a holiday."

"What? Why would that matter?"

"The werewolves trust their own." Hermione explained. "By having a transformation with the local werewolves they would start to respect and accept him."

"Don't worry 'Arry." Apolline said. "Alain informed Remus zat 'e was welcome 'ere anytime. I do agree with 'Ermione though, it is unlikely 'e will come tonight."

It was at that moment Kessy appeared then with a cup of coffee for Fleur while Dobby appeared immediately after her with a cup of tea that he put in front of Harry and then looked crossly at the other elf.

"How are you Dobby?" Harry asked.

"Bun joy Harry Potter sir." Dobby replied as he looked at Harry. "Dobby is learning French."

"So what have you learned so far?" Hermione asked.

"Dobby learned to say hello. Bun joy Miss Hermione." Dobby replied enthusiastically. "Dobby also knows how to say good-bye. It's Our River."

Harry glanced at Hermione and the Delacours who all were obviously trying to hold in a laugh. He looked back at the beaming house-elf. "Excellent Dobby, though I think you need to work on the accent."

"Dobby will do that Harry Potter sir. Does Harry Potter sir and the ladies want breakfast now."

"Yes please." Harry replied. Hermione, Fleur and Gabrielle were also nodding.

Kessy said several words in French and disappeared, followed quickly by Dobby.

"Are they going to be alright?" Hermione asked looking at the spot Dobby disappeared from. Her question was answered when the two elves appeared again. They both had a grip of the same plate and was tugging on it.

"Dobby will serve mistress Fleur." Dobby said tugging on the plate. "She's my mistress."

"Non, ma maîtresse." Kessy replied tugging the plate toward her.

"Kessy, Dobby." Fleur said in a kind but authoritative voice. Both elves immediately stopped and looked at her. "Now Dobby, you must understand zat Kessy 'as been taking care of Gabrielle and me since we were babies. 'Ow would you feel if another elf showed up and started taking care of 'Arry?"

Dobby looked at Harry and then looked at the floor. "Dobby wouldn't like it."

"Oui, now I will tell Kessy she 'as to share in ze responsibilities. Maybe Kessy brings our coffee and tea while you bring ze food?" Fleur suggested. "Or maybe you'd prefer to alternate meals? No matter how you work it out, you and Winky must work with our elves 'ere."

With a little back and forth between Dobby and Kessy it was decided that they would alternate serving drinks and meals on differing days. Soon the elves started working together and the rest of breakfast was served.

"Our river." Dobby said as he served the food and left.

"I will need to make sure our elves are teaching 'im correctly." Apolline said as she tried to hold her smile in and failed. Soon everyone was giggling at the table. "So I understand Professor Berceau is coming later in the week?" Apolline asked to change the subject though she still showed signs she was trying to hold her own amusement in. "Is zere a reason? Something zat is a concern about your bond?"

"Yes Maman." Gabrielle answered and looked at Hermione.

"It's for me ma'am." Hermione started but Apolline raised her hand to halt her explanation.

"Ermione please, zough I want you to be comfortable, I 'ope someday I will not be ma'am to you. Eef you're uncomfortable with

maman or even mum, zen maybe you can just call me Apolline or even apple?"

"Apple?" Hermione asked incredulously.

"Oui." Apolline replied with a smile. "A nickname from an old English friend. Someone I knew before I met Alain."

Hermione laughed. "Thank you. I'll try Ma...Maman."

Apolline smiled. "Zere zat wasn't difficult? Now what is ze problem?"

"Well...I'm starting to display Veela magic." Hermione replied.

"C'est vrai?" Apolline exclaimed as she looked at the young witch. "Your 'air?"

"Yes." Hermione replied. She concentrated and her hair changed back into the bushy tangles she had for so long before she changed it back to the soft curls she liked. "That started a few months back but recently other things started as well. I had blisters that disappeared and my finger and toenails are..." She didn't finish but put out her hand to show the perfect fingernails.

"And zis concerns you?" Apolline asked. "Do you not like ze magic?"

"No...I mean I love it but I'm just concerned about where it stops?" Hermione replied.

"So you just want the good stuff and not what you would consider bad?" Apolline asked sounding slightly affronted.

Hermione realized how her words must have sounded and quickly found her voice. "No...Ma'am..uh I mean maman. I apologize if my words were not reflective of my feelings. Though I admit there are some parts of Veela magic that I would prefer not to have, I would gladly accept them for what this bond has given me. Not only the bond, but the people in the bond."

Apolline studied the teen for a few seconds before nodding. "I can understand, zough may I suggest zat when you meet my mother tonight you do not say such zings? She is a very proud Veela."

"Of course." Hermione replied.

** E E **

Sounds of dogs barking could be heard coming from the barn on a small farm in Derbyshire England. It was early morning and dew still glistened on the grass of the surrounding gardens. In a small copse of trees twenty yards from the door of the house crouched a large black dog. The dog was staring intently at the door as if waiting for something to happen. Laying on the ground next to the dog was a young woman.

"How much longer is this going to take?" The woman whispered to the dog but the dog kept staring at the door unmoving and didn't answer or even look at her. "Fine." She finally whispered. "Don't talk to me." She shifted a little to find a more comfortable spot as the cushioning charm she'd put on the ground had started to fade.

A creaking of the door of the house brought her attention quickly in that direction. Looking through the knee high shrubs that blocked her from being seen from the house, she could see a large overweight woman with no neck step through the door. In her right hand was a glass of light brown liquid while at her heels followed a bulldog.

"Let's check on the bitches this morning Ripper." Marge Dursley's voice could be heard in the quiet morning as she looked down at the old bulldog beside her. "I think if Daisy has another wimp in her litter this time I'll have the Colonel drown her along with the pup." She raised the glass and took a swallow before starting toward the barn.

The barn was in the opposite direction of the copse of trees so as soon as the woman had her back to him, Padfoot broke out of the trees and started moving quietly but quickly across the gardens. The young woman on the other hand raised to her knees and pulled out a strange contraption and looked through a small eye hole on it.

Padfoot was less than ten feet away when Ripper sensed him. The smaller dog stopped and turned to look back. Normally bulldogs are a kind breed of dog, but Ripper had been raised and tempered by Marge Dursley and didn't have a kind bone in his body. He also possessed his mistress' intelligence as he immediately started

snarling and growling at the black dog which was many sizes larger than he was.

Marge Dursley stopped and turned when her dog started snarling and came face to face with a very large black dog who now had his own teeth bared and was growling as well. The fat woman had raised too many dogs to be immediately frightened by one, even one as large as the one facing her. She was used to dog traits and knew that you had to show dominance. "GET AWAY YOU MANGY MUTT!" She yelled at the dog in a tone that always got a dog's attention. Unfortunately for Marge Dursley she wasn't actually facing a dog now. When the dog didn't back away she kicked out at it as hard as she could.

Padfoot moved quickly as the foot moved toward him. He dodged to the right and launched himself at the fat woman who had caused harm to his godson. Leaping up he brought his gnashing teeth within an inch of her face before going back down to four legs. Off balance by the kick that missed and by the lurch she'd involuntarily done when the dog had lunged at her, Marge lost her balance and landed flat on her backside.

Ripper took the opportunity to lunge at the much larger dog. Padfoot saw the movement and swung around to face the challenger. Within two seconds he had the heavy squat bulldog pinned to the ground with his teeth around it's throat. A deep growl from the black dog caused the bulldog to stop struggling and start whimpering. His paws pulled in showing his submission.

"GET OFF HIM YOU BRUTE! GET AWAY FROM MY DOG!" Marge yelled from the ground, trying once again show her dominance over the dog. She got to her knees and swung an overly large arm intending to beat the dog into submission if she had to.

Padfoot released the bulldog as he ducked the arm. Once the arm had passed, he quickly grabbed the sleeve of Dursley's tweed coat in his teeth. By pulling it sharply, the weight of the woman worked against her and she fell back to the ground, one of her massive legs landing on top of her prized pet bulldog pinning him to the ground. Before she could move again, the black dog had two paws on her chest and was growling down into her face. His hot breath coming from a teeth bared mouth that was only inches from her own. Saliva dripped from between the snapping teeth and landed on her face.

Padfoot could see the fear develop in the large woman's eyes. He snapped his jaws an inch from her face and watched her flinch. Again he snapped and again she flinched in fear.

"Ok, time for the next part." Padfoot thought to himself. He suddenly stopped growling and sniffed the air as if he smelled something, he took his paws off the woman and looked away. As expected Marge Dursley took the opportunity to rise and try to run away. When she'd lumbered to her feet as quickly as her massive torso would allow, she started to run toward her house screaming the whole time. Padfoot quickly cut her off before she could reach the door. He growled and snapped at her until she turned and raced in a different direction. This time she tried to escape to the barn only to have the large black dog in her way again. Padfoot could now smell the scent of urine coming from the fat woman as again and again he shepherded her where he wanted her to go.

Soon the fat woman had only one way to run and that was into a patch of woods that were clogged with brambles. She didn't even stop as she plunged into the depths and away from the dog. Thorns ripped at her skin and caught in her clothing as she plunged deeper and deeper into the mass, screaming the whole time.

Padfoot slowed as he watched the overweight woman disappear into the thorny growths. With a sense of satisfaction he sat and stared for a minute or so as he listened to her screams. Soon he turned and trotted back to the copse of trees where the young woman waited.

"Did you get it?" Sirius asked as he morphed into himself.

"At least forty pictures." Tonks replied as she started packing the camera back up.

"Excellent. I also want to talk to Dumbledore about getting your memory of the event. He has something caused a Pensieve that will allow the memory to be experienced. I think the pictures and the memory will be an excellent Birthday present for Harry."

"Someday you're going to have to tell me what that woman did to him that deserved that." Tonks said.

"That's something only Harry can tell you. I only know because I overheard him talking to one of his girlfriends a couple of months ago. It has to do with that bitch and that dog of hers though. I can say that before his third year, she insulted James and Lily enough to cause Harry to have a bad case of accidental magic. He blew her up..I mean literally. She inflated and started floating away. Unfortunately the Ministry obliviated those memories from her so I thought I'd give her a few memories they would have no reason to get rid of." Sirius looked back at the trees Marge Dursley had disappeared into. "She's as bad as those things Harry had to live with."

"Well I don't think she'll forget today."

Sirius and Tonks took care of a few last minute details, including sending the dogs locked in the barn away via portkey before they apparated away. When Sirius left for France, the dogs went with him. Alain had given him an address of an animal rescue farm that specialized in dogs. The bulldogs were left there along with a donation to ensure their care would not be a burden.

Marge Dursley didn't stop running until she was standing on Colonel Fubster's doorstep, half naked, covered with bleeding scratches and screaming her head off. By the time they made it back to her farm the black dog had disappeared, so had every single bulldog that had been in the barn. The only dog left on the farm was Ripper who was hiding under the porch whimpering. It took several hours to coax the terrified dog from his hiding spot. From that day on, Ripper flinched from any dog he saw.

*** E E **

A circular stone table sat near the bluffs on the Delacour estate. Four chairs surrounded the table and that's where Harry and his fiancées were currently sitting. Several books and parchments were piled on the table in front of them.

"I know it's our first day here Harry," Hermione said. "But since we've decided to go back to Hogwarts, we have to get you caught up in Runes. If we're going to be shopping all day tomorrow we have to get started today. We can't even work tonight since we have the dinner."

"I agree." Fleur added. "I also need to get an idea of your defense lessons so I can be ready to do what ze 'Eadmaster wants of me."

"Speaking of that, I wonder who's going to be teaching DADA this year." Harry asked.

"I wish it was Moony again but we know it won't be him." Hermione said.

"Yeah, but it's nice he's got a job where he'll be appreciated." Harry remarked.

"I know, but all we need is another bad defense teacher."

"We're going to have Fleur and can learn most of it on our own if necessary."

"Oui, but it would be nice to 'ave a good instructor." Fleur added.

"What about ze real Moody?" Gabrielle asked. "E was going to teach it last year."

"Possibly, but I doubt it." Harry replied. "Seems to me he's more of an action type of person and with Voldemort back, I can't see him in a classroom."

"True."

"Guess we'll have to wait and see." Hermione said. "Whoever it is, it can't be any worse than Lockhart or Quirrell right?"

"I'm sure they could find someone worse if they really tried." Harry replied as he looked at Hermione. "What if it's Snape? He's been wanting the job."

Hermione wrinkled her nose at Harry. "Don't even think that. Potions is bad enough with him. What would defense be like? I'd be afraid he'd let the Slytherins practice their curses on us and then give us detention if we tried to defend ourselves."

"Yeah, that's about right." Harry agreed. "He'd have to be the worst person for the job."

"No, I could think of worse, what about that toad woman." Hermione said as a joke and then realized what she'd said and quickly glanced at Gabrielle who had turned a shade lighter in color. "I..I'm sorry Gabrielle. I wasn't thinking."

"Eet's all right." Gabrielle replied with a smile that didn't make it to her eyes.

"Don't worry Angel, she's in Azkaban." Harry reached over and took her hand. "And if she ever does get out of there, she'll find that Dementors are nothing compared to me if she ever tries to do anything to you again." Harry's eyes were the darker deep green that all of his bondmates knew meant he truly believed what he was saying.

Gabrielle squeezed his hand. "je sais que...eh..I know."

They returned to work, but a noise from the house interrupted them a few minutes later. They all turned to look at the back door. An older, grey-haired man had exited the house and now was hobbling down the path toward them. He was thin, his clothes were wrinkled and he walked slowly with a cane used to steady his weight. With each slow step he grimaced in pain.

"Is...that isn't Marl is it?" Harry asked.

"Oui..." Fleur answered hesitantly. "But 'e...'e didn't 'ave a cane ze last time I saw 'im and his hair wasn't so grey."

"This is the guy who's going to train us?" Hermione asked quietly.

"Yeah.." Harry stopped when the man almost lost his balance. "Maybe your father didn't know he was this bad off."

"Possibly." Fleur replied. She had a sinking feeling that maybe her father did know and his loyalties to his old friend made him overlook the obvious infirmity Marl had suffered. A wave of disappointment toward her father swept through her. She'd been positive he'd do what was best for Harry.

Harry felt her thoughts and turned to her. "It's alright. We can teach ourselves if necessary, but let's give the guy a chance. I mean you said he's fought a lot of bad guys right?"

Fleur nodded. "Oui."

They waited in silence as the man came nearer and nearer. Finally he hobbled the last few steps and looked at the group of teens. Though his body seemed to be frail, his eyes were still filled with intensity. He took out a handkerchief and wiped his brow. Putting it away, his sharp gaze returned to the four teens. He studied each one long enough to make the person feel nervous. Finally his eyes ended up on the black-haired boy with the lightening-bolt scar on his forehead. "So..." The man said weakly. "You're Harry Potter?"

"Yes sir...you're Mr. Pelletier?" Harry asked and when the man stumbled as he nodded he continued. "Uh.. would you like to sit down sir?"

"Yes, I think I'd better." Marl replied as he grimaced again. He tried to straighten as his hand moved to his back. "Back is killing me."

"Let me help you sir." Hermione offered and she and Gabrielle both move to assist the older gentleman and that's when it happened.

Marl's wand was out in a flash and the last thing Harry saw was an all-to-familiar red light.

Harry's eyes blinked open into the bright southern France sunlight. A headache pounded his head as he looked up into the blue sky trying to figure out what happened and why was he laying on the ground. Just as he started to collect his thoughts a gruff voice spoke out. "Welcome back kid."

Harry spun off the ground and reached for his wand only to find it missing. The old man, Marl, was standing there with all four wands in his hand. He no longer looked frail and his hair had lost most of it's grey. He was twirling his cane in his hand as he grinned back at Harry.

Harry quickly looked around and saw his bondmates each blinking their eyes and stirring as well as they started to look around in confusion.

"Lesson number one." Marl said as he tossed the wands back to their owners. "NEVER let your guard down."

"You didn't give us a chance." Harry exclaimed. "You took advantage of the fact that we trusted you."

"And that brings us to lesson number two." Marl said. "Never TRUST anyone. You had no business trusting me. You don't know me."

"I do and Papa..." Fleur started.

"Could very well be dead in your house." Marl finished with a snarl as he pointed his thumb over his shoulder at the house. "Along with your mother and everyone else. I could be polyjuiced or under the Imperious Curse."

"More constant vigilance." Harry muttered. "Told you his letter sounded like the fake."

"Constant Vigilance huh?" Marl asked. "Alastor Moody?"

"You know him?" Hermione asked as she stood up from the ground and took her seat back at the table.

"Met him a few times over the years." Marl replied. "Man's got a good head on his shoulders."

"I'll take your word for it." Harry replied as he glared at the man.

"Still angry at me for stunning you?" Marl asked with a wry grin on his face.

"It wasn't like it was a fair fight." Harry complained. "You tricked us..."

"Of course I did." Marl replied cutting the young man off. "Sit down... all of you." He gestured toward the table. When the teens were once more sitting in their seats he continued. "Look kids, I'm not here to teach you how to duel, I'm here to teach you how to fight and more important, how to stay alive."

Last Chapter

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Chapter 41

"I thought dueling was fighting." Hermione said. "I mean in our second year we were shown how to duel..."

Marl shook his head as he sighed. "Let me guess, you were shown two people bowing and all that crap right?"

"Well yeah..."

"Do you think Death Eaters are going to bow to you? Wait for you to get your wand out? Think one'll offer to make you a cup of tea while you dig your wand out of your book bag?"

Hermione blushed as her eyes glanced at her bag. Her wand had been in there.

Marl's eyes went back to Harry, "As for tricking you...hell isn't that exactly what Voldemort did to get you away from Hogwarts? Didn't he have a polyjuiced person in the school that could have killed you any time he wanted?"

"I...yeah I guess."

"Then don't be angry at me for not fighting fair just now. Your enemy cheats, so you need to be ready for it and learn to do it yourself. Hell if you think you're going to win this war or heck even stay alive by fighting fair then you might as well go jump off that bluff now." He pointed toward the ledge that overlooked the sea below. "It'll save me a lot of trouble."

"But..." Harry started again.

"But what kid?" The American Auror said. "There are two ways people come out of wars; Alive or dead. Which do you prefer to be?"

"Alive of course." Hermione replied.

"Then if you do have to fight against Death Eaters or worst, Voldemort the whole key is to make sure they are the one who don't finish the war." Marl glared at the four teens before he started speaking again. "And that means you do whatever it takes to make it happen. In fact I'll go so far as to say if you're fighting fair, you're doing it wrong."

Silence fell over the group as the teens looked at each other.

"There was an American military general, a muggle of course." Marl started again in a less gruff voice. "His name was Patton and he fought in this very country fifty years ago. He once said something that I've taken to heart. It goes something like 'the object of war isn't to die for your country, but to make your enemies die for his'. That's the attitude you must have. This isn't about honor or anything like that, this is about life. If you have to fight Voldemort's group you'll be fighting to stay alive for they won't care about killing you or..." He glanced at the woman around the table, "worse." A look of sadness crossed his eyes as he seemed to remember something, then they refocused and his glare returned.

All the teens remembered the story Fleur had told them about Marl and the young lady. No words were spoken but they all got the idea of what he meant.

"Now let's see if you can think." Marl said breaking the silence that had sprung up. "Tomorrow I do believe you're going shopping right?"

"Oui, Maman is taking us to Marseilles tomorrow." Gabrielle said.

Marl nodded. "Tell me, what is the first thing that should go through your mind if two Death Eaters suddenly confront you?"

"Uh..." Harry stammered and then thought about Marl specifically saying there were two of them. He instantly decided on an answer. "Try to stun one of them so it's easier to fight the other one?"

"WRONG!" Marl exclaimed as he slammed down on the table making the teens jump. "Your first thoughts should be 'how do I GET MY ASS OUT OF HERE!'"

"But...but you mean run away?" Harry exclaimed. "What if they were innocent people around?"

"Kid, when it comes to battling Death Eaters or any other criminal, the winner and loser is decided by whoever is alive and who isn't." Marl snarled. "You're only what...fifteen? Do you really think you can take on Death Eaters and win?"

"That's what we thought you were here to do, teach us how to defeat them." Harry said as his voice clearly showed his frustration. "Besides I...I've fought a few things before."

"Hero type aren't you?" Marl asked as he eyed the young man in front of him. "You rush into things without regards to your own safety, don't you?"

Harry blushed but he looked defiantly at his instructor.

Marl unexpectedly started laughing as he looked at Harry. "Don't get me wrong kid, there will be a time to fight, but unless it's otherwise unavoidable, it should ALWAYS be at the time and the place of your choosing. Then you kick the bastards down and stomp on them. Now as for any innocents being around, they'll be in a lot more danger if you stop and fight. Especially if you show you'll try to protect them."

"What?" Harry exclaimed in obvious confusion. "How does that make sense?"

"About the innocent people? Come on kid, use your brain." Marl growled. "THINK! If Death Eaters know you'll stop and help anyone they threaten, guess what they'll start doing? Threatening people on purpose JUST to get your attention, force you to fight when they want you to fight and where they want you to fight."

Harry's scowl slowly left his face as he thought about what Marl had said.

"Let's get one thing straight. You four are not Aurors, you are students who seem to draw attention from the wrong people. So yes, running away is EXACTLY what you should do until you are sure you can win the fight." Marl's voice dipped a little as he continued. "Let's say you did turn and fight those Death Eaters. During the fight you take out both of them but in doing so, one of you ends up dead, would you say you won the fight?" He pointed a finger at Fleur. "Let's say it's you who died." He then looked back at Harry and the rest of the group. "Fleur's dead but the two Death Eaters are either dead or captured, did you win?"

Harry swallowed as he looked at his oldest bondmate. He remembered the Acromantula almost killing her, he remembered the graveyard. Her eyes met his for a second but his gaze immediately dropped to the table; it was several seconds of silence before Harry's eyes finally rose to look at Marl. "No..." He whispered.

"Exactly." Marl said. "There are no guarantees in this war but I'll tell you from experience, it's a lot better to get the hell out of Dodge when you aren't sure you can win than to lose someone because you had too much pride to leave. Don't be stupid and think you can take on the world. Remember that stupid people usually die first when the fighting starts. As I said before, you aren't Aurors, you aren't soldiers; you are kids who are drawing the wrong people's attention. You have no reason to stay and fight if threatened. So I repeat, until you are sure you can win, don't take chances. Run away, retreat...call it what you want. Just avoid fighting until you are sure you can win."

Harry looked at each of his bondmates. He didn't like the idea of running away from Death Eaters but he knew the American Auror was right. He could not afford to lose any of the women he loved. Again his eyes found Marl's and he nodded.

"Good, so that means the first thing to teach you will be how to avoid fights."

Hermione raised her hand again. "Sir what...what kind of things will you teach us."

"I'm not your professor girl so don't keep raising your hand. Ask me what you want; you'll know if you annoy me."

"She's not a 'girl'." Harry said irritably as he rose from his chair. "Her name is Hermione."

Marl shook his head as he sighed. "You need to learn to control that temper." He pointed at Hermione. "I know her name. Hermione Granger, British as you are, muggleborn, daughter of Richard and Jean Granger. She owns a half kneazle. She's extremely smart, top of her class at Hogwarts. Gryffindor and according to Alain one of your bondmates."

Harry looked at the man in surprise.

"Yes Alain told me. He knew it was necessary. Now I'm not sure how a witch who is not Veela became part of it, and it's not that important to me." He paused for a second before continuing. "Shall I tell you all that I know about the Delacours as well? I could tell you much more about them because I've known them their whole lives." Marl eyes leveled on Harry. "Surprised you didn't I? Did you really think I came unprepared to whom I'm teaching?"

"I...I guess not."

"And if you can you should do the same when it comes to fights. It's best to know your opponents. You might be surprised that the smallest thing about them can be their biggest weakness. Like I know you have a temper and I can use it against you. Call you a few names and you'll lose your focus."

Harry gritted his teeth but said nothing.

"I actually called her that on purpose. I wanted to see if I could rile you, push your buttons enough for you to flare." Marl said. "Which obviously I did. Now first rule of avoiding fights is easy; don't let the small stuff bother you. Look at Hermione." Marl instructed him as he pointed at the witch in question. "Did she get hurt by me calling her a girl? You know the old kids saying about sticks and stones? Live by it."

"He's right Harry." Hermione said trying to placate her bondmate.

"Now back to Miss Granger's question of what am I going to teach you? We are going to have practical lessons where you learn magic and then there will be lessons that require you to think."

"What do you mean think?" Harry asked.

"I mean I'm going to make you do exactly that. I'm going to give you scenarios and you'll have to figure out what to do. Some of those will be tactical in nature which means given a certain situation what would you do now or in short term. You need to learn to think quickly and correctly. Then there will be more strategic scenarios. Those will get you thinking longer term. We'll examine what you decide in both situations and look at the possible consequences."

"Oh...Ron would have loved those." Hermione whispered to Harry.

"Should I know who this Ron person is?" Marl questioned.

"Ron Weasley." Hermione replied. "He's a...well he's a friend. He's very good at chess. He can beat anyone and would probably be very good at these kinds..."

"Chess?" Marl said with a chuckle. "You think being good at chess would make you better at battles?"

"Well...yes." Hermione replied as her voice wavered. "I mean that's what chess is, battles and everything."

"No, chess is a game where there are rules. In the game every piece HAS to move in a certain way. You can know EVERY possible thing your opponent can do." Marl said. "That is not the case in fighting real battles. In fighting there are no rules and no boundaries. More so in magical fighting. Your opponent might know spells you've never experienced. With polyjuice potions and Imperius your own people might be used against you, with apparition and wards, movements can be instantaneous or limited." Marl paused as he gazed at Hermione. "Since you're muggleborn I presume you've played the game Monopoly right?"

"Yes..."

"Are you good at the game?"

"Somewhat. I mean I can beat my parents."

"So you're ready to go take on the business world? Start a hotel empire?"

"No, of course not."

"Same difference. Just because you're good at a game that simulates something, doesn't mean you are good at that in real life." Marl explained. When he was sure he had everyone's attention again he continued. "Now, back to my original thoughts. As I said we'll also do practical magic as well. My first priority there, as I said is helping you avoid fights." He looked at Harry. "Alain described your encounter with Voldemort in the graveyard; can you tell me the one big thing you did wrong?"

"Wrong?" Harry exclaimed. "I was tricked into going there, had to fight a Death Eater, then had a giant snake sneak up behind me and of course had my arm sliced open and Voldemort returned. If it hadn't been for Fleur and..."

"So you don't think you did anything wrong?" Marl asked cutting Harry off again. He looked around at the others. "Anyone want to tell me what his primary mistake was?"

"He..he shouldn't have stayed." Hermione spoke up hesitantly.

"Exactly." Marl said and actually smiled at Hermione before he looked back at Harry. "You should have got the hell out of there or at least moved to a defensible location as soon as you could."

"It wasn't like I knew Voldemort or Wormtail were there." Harry argued. "Besides what was I suppose to do? Run away just because I don't know where I am? If that's your idea of right, I don't agree. I'm not a coward."

"No...no you're not." Marl agreed. "I know what you did in that graveyard for Fleur, but you are foolish and stubborn if you think leaving a place you were tricked into is a sign of cowardice." He held up a hand to stop Harry's retort. "That's enough of that for now. We will discuss it another time, but tell me would you have stayed if you had an instant way back to get back to Hogwarts? Would it be cowardice to portkey or apparate away?"

Harry was still simmering but answered. "Sirius offered me his portkey but I wasn't allowed to have any form of magical travel in the contest. Though it seems the cup was still a portkey I had no idea it was one."

"That wasn't my question?"

"It's a useless question because I don't know how to apparate and I didn't have a portkey." Harry said angrily.

"Fair enough." Marl replied. "Has Alain given you your portkeys yet? I didn't see any when I took your wands."

"Non, Papa 'asn't." Fleur answered.

"I'll be discussing that with him this evening when he gets back from Paris. Once he does give them to you, I don't want to see you without them, is that clear?"

Four heads nodded.

"Also starting next week you four will start learning to apparate."

"But...but we're not old enough." Hermione stammered as her hand went half way in the air before it stopped. "Fleur is but...you...you have to be seventeen and..."

"What's the penalty for underage apparition?" Marl asked cutting Hermione off.

"Uh...I don't know." Hermione admitted.

"In Great Britain it's a fine of ten galleons." Marl replied. "Now what's your life worth?"

"..." Hermione had opened her mouth but she didn't have an answer.

"I'm not saying you should apparate around the country, but it is the fastest way to get out of a dangerous situation. With you being underage, it's unlikely they'll have wards up. It's also better to pay ten galleons for apparating than having your family pay that much for a headstone." Marl asserted. "At my insistence Alain hired an apparition tutor. They'll be here an hour each day until you are

proficient. By the time you can apparate we should be finished with how to avoid fights and have started on how to kick people's asses. If there is time left in the summer, I'll try to show you how to apparate while fighting. I will warn you now though, don't try it until you are very very comfortable with apparating. If you splinch yourself badly in a fight, you're dead."

The four teens glanced at each other.

"Now as I said my first priority is to avoid fighting." Marl reminded them. "So outside of apparition we'll begin with things like how to disillusion yourself, the supersensory charm so you can sense people and things around you and several revealing charms to detect people in hiding. Since those damn Dementors will be on Voldemort's side soon we'll also try for the Patronus but that's..."

"Zat's somezing zat Papa didn't tell you." Fleur said interrupting their instructor.

"What do you mean?"

Fleur winked at her bondmate and bond sisters. With a mental coordination they each brought up their wands and said the incantation. An otter soon stood at the feet of a brilliant stag and doe while a silver Osprey circled them.

"Damn..." Muttered Marl as he watched the four patronuses until they disappeared. "Impressive." But that was all the ground the Auror gave as his focus returned. "At least that will save time. That might allow us time to get into silent casting. There are two of those that I really want you to learn. The spell cancelling and summoning charms."

"Why those two?"

"If you get silenced you have to be able to cancel the hex. If you can't do it silently, well you can't do it can you?" Marl explained. "As for summoning...Harry stand up." He motioned for Harry to stand in a spot ten feet away from him. "Know your shield charm?"

Harry nodded.

"Then block these stunners." Marl said as he started verbalizing the stupefy spell. He went slowly, giving Harry plenty of time to react with his shield. After four stunners, Marl's wand moved slightly different, but then continued in the stunning spell pattern.

"Ouch.." Harry exclaimed as a small rock hit in the back of the head. His concentration broke and the next stunner hit him full on.

It was Hermione's face he was looking into when he was revived again.

"Guess I should have expected something like that." Harry said to her as he climbed to his feet. "Maybe the Dursleys would have been better."

"Better than this?" Hermione asked as she kissed him. "Or sleeping with me tonight?"

"Well if two are finished." Marl said when the two finished their kiss, "we can continue."

Harry and Hermione took their seats.

"A silent summoning spell can be extremely effective in a fight like I just proved."

"You could have just told us why." Harry muttered as he rubbed the sore spot on the back of his head.

"You'll find I like demonstrations much better." Marl replied. "It gets the point across more effectively."

"And painfully?"

"That too. Now when you learn the supersensory spell, you won't fall for that so easily." Marl said. "If you'd had that protecting you, you'd have sensed the rock coming at you."

"Can we learn that one first then?" Harry asked. The spot on the back of his head still smarted.

"Yeah, no problem." Marl smirked. "Now that's a start of what we'll be doing, does anyone have any suggestions on things they'd like to work on this summer?"

"Sir..." Harry said as he remembered something from the Graveyard. "What about wandless summoning? Voldemort was able to summon his wand from his robes when returned. It seems if we are away from our wands or drop them, it would be very useful."

"Damn useful I agree, but it takes a lot of time to develop the mental discipline to do wandless magic and I'm not sure we have that much time." Marl considered for a second. "No, it would take too much time. I'll get you some books and you can work on it on your own when you have time. Will that work for you?"

They all nodded.

"Now, how fast did you do your run today?"

"Uh...we haven't run." Harry admitted and then seeing the look on Marl's face he added. "But we'll go get changed and run now."

"You're correct you'll run now." Marl agreed testily. "But they'll be no changing." He reached into a pocket and brought out a watch. "You can start..." He paused as he waited for the second hand to reach the top, "now."

"But our shoes..." Fleur started. She and Hermione were both wearing thong sandals.

"Think a Death Eater is going to let you change your shoes?" Marl snarled and pulled out his wand. "Stinging Hexes for anyone not running in five seconds."

"But where do we run?" Hermione asked. "We don't...ouch." The last said as a silent stinging hex hit her left arm.

"Leave her alone." Harry said angrily as he stepped in front of his bondmate and raised his own wand.

"Kid put your wand away before you get hurt." Marl said as stared lazily at Harry. "Thirty seconds already gone..."

"Harry, come on." Hermione said pulling his wand down. "We knew we were supposed to run."

"We don't have to..." Harry started as he still glowered at Marl.

"Yes we do." Fleur said silently. "It's another test to force you to control your temper. Do you really want to keep proving 'im right?"

Harry gave one last glare at Marl before he nodded and the four teens started jogging. Fleur led the way and soon they were jogging through the garden paths in front of the house. Fleur and Hermione had kicked off the sandals they had been wearing and ran barefoot. As soon as they were out of sight of Marl, they both quickly cast cushioning charms on their feet.

"Good pace." Marl said fifteen minutes later when the teens collapsed back at the table. It was a very warm day and sweat poured off of them.

"Dobby, Winky?" Harry gasped.

"Bun joy Harry Potter and...and mad-mo-snails." Dobby said when he popped in.

"Dobby, it's mad-wo-zeels." Winky corrected Dobby, incorrectly.

"Eets Mad-mwa...mwa wiz ze wa sound." Gabrielle corrected them. "Mad-mwa-zelle."

"You can work on your french later, but could you two get us something to drink and wet towels as well."

"OUI!" Dobby said and he and Winky disappeared.

"At least they got that right." Hermione said.

"Or it just might have been an exclamation of glee." Harry replied with a smile.

Marl looked at the lack of shoes on Fleur and Hermione's feet. He also noticed they weren't hurt. "Cushioning charms?" he asked as he motioned toward their feet.

"Oui." Fleur replied and waited for him to make some kind of disparaging comment.

"Good thinking." Marl said instead. "The kind of thinking you need to do." He looked at Harry. "I'm not trying to intentionally make your life difficult, just presenting real life to you. If you get attacked and have to make a run for it, you have to be prepared to run." He looked back at Fleur. "There used to be a shoe store in Rue de la Ménagerie Magique that made shoes that can convert from one style to another. Stop there tomorrow and see if they have something you like but can convert to running shoes."

"Zank you." Fleur said.

"You might also want to look for wand rings." Marl said. "You'll have to ask for them in a wand shop since they have to be custom made for your wand. They're not cheap either but they're worth it."

"What's a wand ring?" Hermione asked.

"One of these." Marl said as he pulled a necklace out of his shirt. At the end of it was a small silver ring around a solid black center. Marl took his wand and pressed it into the center black and pushed. His wand started to disappear into the blackness. When only an inch was remaining he stopped and let it drop. His wand was now just an inch long piece of wood with a silver ring around its top dangling at the end of a necklace. "Now, if I need it." He reached up and grasped the wood and yanked. The wand slid back out of the ring and in an instant it was back in Marl's hand.

"How...how does that work?"

"Ever seen a bottomless bag or magically enhanced space?"

"Yes. We had a tent last week that was magically expanded."

"Same principle." Marl said. "You can get them charmed so only you can pull your wand out. They are decorative enough to be worn in public in the muggle world, but easily accessible. They sell wrist holders and ankles holders as well, but I think these are the best solution."

Dobby and Winky returned at that time and put out several pitchers of drinks including ice water, lemonade and juices along with a platter of fresh fruits and cheeses. They also had several damp towels. These the teens took and started removing the sweat from their bodies.

"Now," Marl said when the teens had served themselves drinks. "At least you're not too out of shape. Starting tomorrow, I want all of you to levitate a stone and run while keeping it levitated."

"Non, zat's impossible." Fleur exclaimed.

Marl silently levitated a stone from the ground and started jogging. He ran a hundred yards, turned and ran back. The rock waivered a couple of times as it hung in the air beside him, but never fell. "No, it's not impossible." Marl said when he returned. "But it's a damn good way to improve your concentration in a short time. You have to be able to focus even when other things are happening around you. You have to do magic and still move. Standing still in a fight will get you killed." After a pause he continued. "Ok now let's get started on today's lesson. As Mr. Potter requested, we'll start with the Supersensory charm. It's an advanced charm that will allow you to sense movement around you. It won't tell you what it is, but no one is going to sneak up on you while it is active. When you learn the spell I want you to start using it regularly. You need to get use to the effects it has. It's sort of like your peripheral vision; you can train yourself to see what you're not really seeing." He then demonstrated the correct wand movements and incantation and set them to practicing.

Marl sat down and poured himself a glass of lemonade as he watched the four teens start working on the spell. He was pleased that all of them were putting significant effort into the spell. "You need a little more wrist action Gabrielle." He said. "You're turning your wrist too much Potter."

Marl wasn't surprised when Fleur picked up the spell after only thirty minutes. She was the oldest and had three more years of school. He was shocked with what happened next though. All of the teens stopped when Fleur made the spell work. First Harry seemed to concentrate as Fleur did the spell three more times. He then got it right on the first attempt. Marl then watched Hermione and Gabrielle concentrate and Harry performed the spell several times. They too

completed the spell perfectly after that. Within twenty minutes of Fleur learning the spell, all the teens could perform it correctly.

"You 'ave to admit zat was impressive." a voice said from behind them.

"Hello Alain." Marl said without turning around. "Back a little early aren't you?"

"Ze Minister wrapped up 'is interviews earlier zan expected and I decided to come 'ome."

"Where are the kid's Portkeys?" Marl grumbled. "Thought they were going to have them the moment they got here."

"Remember zey are 'ere a week earlier zan expected." Alain explained. "I picked zem up today and zey are in ze 'ouse." He turned to the teens. "Apolline said you should go get ready for zis evening. 'Er mozzer will be 'ere soon and she wants you...presentable."

The teens, who had sat back down and started refilling their glasses rose to their feet and as one looked at Marl.

"Remember to levitate the stone on your run tomorrow. Knowing Apolline I doubt you'll back from Marseilles in time to do much afterwards, but if you are, we'll review the spell you learned and start on the next one. Remember to practice it as much as possible."

Alain stayed when the bonded teens started toward the house. When they were out of earshot he turned to his old friend. "Well old friend?"

"Potter's got a temper, but I think they'll do alright as long as I can get them thinking." Marl responded. "If they can pick up spells like they did today, we'll be able to cram a lot into them but do you have any idea how they did it?"

"Zey are using ze bond." Alain explained. "When one learns a spell, Harry can experience them performing it. The other two can then learn from him performing it."

"That's a neat trick."

"Oui, do not underestimate zem Marl."

"Guess that's how they learned the Patronus? Should have told me about that."

"Aarry learned it over a year ago. 'E was ze one to teach ze rest, but yes it was ze first thing zey taught each other with ze bond. As for telling you, I figured zey should surprise you at least once."

"It did, so now you've had your fun. Anything else I should know?"

"Don't zreaten ze young women or you'll upset 'Arry. 'E is very defensive of zem."

"I noticed. He needs to learn to control his temper though. Don't think I'm going to take it easy, if I have to sting the girls a bit..."

"Non Marl, you do not understand. 'E is more powerful zan 'e looks. 'E is probably more powerful zan you are."

Marl chuckled. "Good joke."

"I'm serious my friend." Alain said. "Ze boy drove off over a 'undred Dementors with 'is Patronus and sliced a fourteen foot Acromantula in two piece...with a standard cutting spell."

Marl was about to laugh again at Alain's joke but then saw the look in his old friend's eyes. "You're not kidding are you?"

"Non, 'Arry is very powerful and 'e will use zat power to protect zose young women. Tread carefully when it comes to zem because 'e won't back down. Ze boy's faced Voldemort on more zan one occasion and killed a thousand year old Basilisk with a sword, 'e's not going to fear a crusty old Auror."

"Crusty my ass." Marl fulminated. He glared at his friend. "Kid's really done all that?"

"Oui."

"You could have told me all of this earlier you know."

"I didn't zink some of zis should be discussed in a letter. Since I didn't expect zem 'ere until next week, I zought I'd 'ave time to tell you all of zis before zey came." Alain explained.

"Apparition instructor still due next week?"

"Oui, but let's go to my study for the rest of his discussion. I 'ave a bottle of 1972 Chateau Angelus waiting to be opened."

"Lead the way then." Marl replied. "You can tell me more about the kid's exploits."

*** E E ***

With his arms filled with the clothes he was going to change into once he took his shower, Harry opened the door to the bathroom and then stopped short. "Uh...sorry Hermione." He said as his face turned red when he saw her sitting on the toilet reading a book. He immediately backed out of the bathroom and closed the door.

"Harry." Hermione called as the door shut. "Harry, it's alright."

"I didn't know you were in there, I should have checked..."

"And if I was really concerned I could have locked the door. I know you've seen me nude before and as far as I can tell, it doesn't smell in here. If you can still actually love me after seeing me use the bathroom you are more than welcome to come in and take your shower. We do need to hurry."

The door opened a crack. "Are you sure?" Harry asked.

Hermione shrugged. "We are going to be spending a lifetime together; I don't think we'll..." She stopped as a loud two second burst of flatulence escaped her. Her face turned red as she looked up at Harry who had walked all the way in. "Sorry..."

Harry smirked. "Why Hermione, I didn't think you had it in you."

"Well actually it's not anymore is it?" Hermione replied setting the two off laughing.

"Well at least it doesn't smell." Harry said after the laughter had settled. "Unlike Ron's. He can make the whole bathroom unusable for hours."

"Ginny warned me when I got to the Burrow before the World Cup." Hermione remarked. "Fortunately I didn't have to experience it. Now get in the shower. I'm finished and I'm not sure our relationship is ready for you to watch me wipe."

Harry smiled as he reached into the shower and started the water. When he looked back at Hermione she was watching him with a gleam in her eyes. "What?" He asked. "You said you've seen me naked before."

"Yes, but watching you take your clothes off is a bit more exciting than you seeing yourself in a mirror. Now get on with it. Remember we're in a hurry."

Harry reached over his head and pulled his shirt off. As he dropped it to the floor he looked at Hermione again. He could feel her nervousness, but she kept her eyes on him. He reached for his pants and after unbuttoning them, slid them down and step out of them. As he stood in front of his bondmate in nothing but his boxers he again gazed questioningly at his best friend.

Hermione was nervous. It really was different for Harry to completely undress in front of her than to just see him naked in front of a mirror from his own eyes. She swallowed and smiled at him and nodded. "Go on..."

Harry shrugged and lowered his underwear.

"It's a bit more impressive in person you know." Hermione said as she studied her bondmate in all of his glory. She'd of course had felt what she could now see pressed against her on a couple of the mornings she'd wakened next to Harry but still, seeing it in person made her realized that it wouldn't be too long before their relationship moved to that level. She realized at that moment that the thought of being intimate with Harry no longer concerned her; in fact she was starting to look forward to it.

"So not disappointed?" Harry asked.

"Even if it wasn't as..." Her eyes flickered downward and then back up to his emerald green ones, "impressive as it is, I don't think you could ever disappoint me Harry."

Harry could feel the love she had for him. He smiled. "I love you Mione."

"I know and I love you. Now I've had my show so get in the shower." Hermione directed. Harry smiled and walked into the steaming water.

As Hermione walked past the shower on the way to her room, she hesitated. She thought about joining Harry but then she shook her head and continued to her room where she got her own clothes and waited for the shower.

*** E E ****

When the bondmates came down the steps a short time later, Apolline was waiting. "Maman is waiting in ze library. She is most eager to meet 'Arry and 'Ermione."

"Est-elle de bonne humeur?"

"She's in a good mood though she is anxious about somezing she would not share. She is eager to know ze wizard who 'as captured 'er ze 'earts of her petite filles."

Fleur nodded and they started toward the library. "If possible, always ask what grand-mère's mood is before you see 'er." She warned Harry and Hermione. She opened the doors to the library and entered.

Harry's first glance of Fleur's grandmother showed an extremely attractive woman with regal airs sitting in a chair. He couldn't help but think she'd look just as fair sitting upon a throne. Her white-gold hair was short, only shoulder length and it fell in gentle waves that framed her face. Though he knew she was Fleur's grandmother, she didn't look any older than his Aunt Petunia, not that he'd ever compare the two of them in any way. Her actual age could be guessed by the gentleman who sat in a chair beside her. What little hair that existed on his head was white and cut very short. He had a grey beard that was also trimmed short. Wrinkles had already begun

to form on his face, especially around his eyes. If Harry were to guess, he'd say the man was well into his sixties.

"Fleur, Gabrielle." The woman said in a voice that was almost musical as she rose from her seat and made her way over to them. She hugged her granddaughters and turned her gaze at the other two teens.

"Grand-mère." Fleur said as she and Gabrielle both took one of Harry's hands. "Zis is mine and Gabrielle's bondmate, 'Arry Potter. And zis is our bondsister, 'Ermione Granger. 'Arry, 'Ermione zis is Aglaia Laurent, our grand-mère and zis is Sebastian Laurent, our grand-père." She finished when the balding man had joined them.

"Bonjour Monsieur Potter and Mademoiselle Granger." Aglaia said in her musical voice. "Eet is nice to meet ze man who 'as stolen ze 'earts of mes filles and of course ze witch whom I've heard so much about." The last was said with an undefinable tone. Her eyes didn't seem to hold the same warmth when she addressed Hermione.

"Bonjour." Harry replied hoping he didn't sound like an idiot. He first clasped Fleur's grandfather hand in a firm handshake and then turned his gaze to Aglaia.

"Kiss her hand." Fleur silently directed when Harry took Fleur's grandmother's hand in his.

"Bonjour Madam." Harry said as he raised her hand while also bending. As he kept his eyes on her, he pressed his lips to the back of her hand and released it.

"Vous êtes un gentilhomme." Fleur's grandmother commented.

"She said you were a gentleman." Fleur translated for him.

"Thank you is merci right?"

"Oui."

"Merci Madam. I apologize, but without Fleur I am hopeless in your language." Harry said.

Aglaia nodded regally to her granddaughter's bondmate. "My own excuses...eh apologies." Her eyes met his before she continued. "You do not know ze 'appiness zat I felt when my filles' ...eh...carelessness brought zem 'appiness instead of what could 'ave been."

"I think I'd prefer to call it fate ma'am." Harry replied. "They have given me much more than I could ever give them."

"Welcome to ze family." Aglaia replied as she pulled Harry into a hug. When she let go she turned her attention to Hermione who was waiting nervously. The Veela's eyes roamed over the English witch as if studying her. "And you mademoiselle, I understand you are part of ze Veela bond?" She emphasized the word Veela.

"Oui Madam." Hermione replied nervously. "I...I am very happy that my bondsisters allowed me to join with the man I love."

"Is zat all Veela means to you? A magical way to connect with a man?"

"No ma'am." Hermione replied. "I...I..." she tried but was unsure what to say. She remembered the admonishment from Apolline earlier.

"What do you know of my race." Aglaia asked as a single eyebrow rose above an eye.

"Uh...I don't know nearly enough," Hermione admitted trying to hide her apprehension, "But...but I want to know everything I can. I mean before my last school year and the Quidditch World I'd never heard of...of your race. I mean I've now read many books about Veela now..."

"Books?" Aglaia scoffed.

"Non, you can not 'elp." Fleur said to her bondmate when Harry was about to speak up. "Gabrielle?"

"Oui." Gabrielle replied.

Together Fleur and Gabrielle both took up positions on either side of Hermione. Each took one of Hermione's hands and squeezed.

"Grand-mère?" Fleur questioned. "What ees ze problem?"

"It's alright." Hermione told Fleur but returned the pressure to each of her bond sister's hands. She took a deep breath and let it out as she locked eyes with Aglaia. Hermione felt less nervous facing the older Veela with Gabrielle and Fleur beside her; supporting her. She also could feel Harry questioning her if she needed his help. Her voice was stronger and more determined when she continued. "Yes books. As I said, I had no knowledge of Veela before last summer. Even then my first impression was less than favorable." At this statement, Aglaia's eyebrow rose again but Hermione pushed on. "It was a shallow opinion formed with no knowledge of your race except that my friends were acting strangely because of the Veela at the World Cup. Even when I first met Fleur my opinion of her was..." she looked at her bond sister and smiled a small smile before continuing "not favorable, but that was because I thought she was stuck-up and arrogant, not because she was Veela. Now though, your granddaughters are my sisters in more than just this bond. I love them truly AS sisters and I respect who they are. I respect Apolline and truly want to consider her another parent of mine. Though even with that, I have to admit outside of the two Veela who helped with the bonding, you are the first full Veela I have met personally. So I can only truly say what I know comes from books and of course Gabrielle and Fleur but...but I want to know so much more. I want to know all I can about my sisters and their heritage; I want to know what allowed me to share in the beautiful gift the bond is; I want to know what it means to be Veela."

"But what is your true opinion of Veela?" Aglaia asked in a challenging voice. "Understand zat I AM a Veela, not a 'uman with certain magical powers. Ze English 'ave long prosecuted zose who are not 'uman. Can you say you do not?"

"I have no biases against your race." Hermione declared. "Nor any race..." She stopped when it started. As soon as she saw the older Veela's skin start to change, Hermione remembered that a full Veela could change without provocation. She also realized it was a test. She swallowed as she fought down her fear. Hermione forced herself to keep her eyes locked on the older woman's all through her transformation. Hermione heard the rip of fabric as Aglaia's wings tore through the back of her dress. She then watched the beauty of the woman's face distorted as it elongated into its avian shape.

Before too long a full avian transformed Veela stood only two feet in front of her. The beak sharp and dangerous along with eyes that had turned black. Still Hermione refused to take her eyes away from the Veela.

"I do not fear that which is part of my bond sisters' heritage nor do I think less of them because of it." Hermione said forcefully. "I know Fleur and Gabrielle would prefer to not transform, but it IS a part of them and I fully accept them and love them." Hermione paused she tried to figure out what else she could say. Finally she thought of a way to get her point across more quickly. "I may not have Veela blood in my body nor born to the heritage..." Hermione paused and closed her eyes and allowed her hair to change into the long straight hair that Fleur liked to wear. When it was complete she looked again at the Veela in front of her, "but it is part of me and I would want it no other way."

Aglaia's bird eyes blinked and her head tilted to its side and then straighten. Slowly the bird features started melting back into her body. "You have manifested Veela magic?" She asked when her head was once again of human shape.

"Yes Ma'am." Hermione replied. "Some anyway. The professor from Veela Magical who helped with the bond is due later in the week to help us understand why it might have happened. I welcome it though, how much or how little it doesn't matter because it means something I can share with my sisters."

Aglaia stared at Hermione for several seconds until finally she smiled. "Please forgive me Mademoiselle and welcome to ze family. I just needed to know."

"Know what?" Hermione asked as her body seemed to deflate from the nervous excitement.

"As I said, your true opinion of Veela." Aglaia replied, this time in a much friendlier voice. "We are a very misunderstood race. Many see us as only beautiful humans with tempers or creatures zat must be controlled or worse, used. Many Veela 'ave fallen for 'umans mistaking ze lust ze man felt, for ze love ze Veela zought was zere. As you know once a Veela bonds, zere is no way to undo it. Can you imagine it? Connected to a man who only wants you for your body? To find out 'ow little you mean to 'im on ze day zat should be

ze 'appiest day of your life? And zen be reminded of it every single day for zat life?"

Hermione nodded and swallowed as she imagined such a possibility, but she didn't reply because she knew there was more.

"What Fleur and Gabrielle did was very foolish and could 'ave cost zem zeir lives or at least zeir 'appiness but zey were fortunate zat zeir bond is with a young man with a good heart. When Apolline told me ze young man now returned ze love of my filles, I rejoiced, but zere was still an unknown, you. An unknown at least when it came to Veela. Apolline 'ad many zings to say and all conveyed you in a glowing light, but zat was of you as a person. Unfortunately many fine people are also very bigoted. I knew you loved Monsieur Potter, but what about Veela? What did my race mean to you? Did you 'arbor ill feelings or biases toward my people? If you 'ad children in ze future would you zink your pure 'uman children might be better zan Fleur or Gabrielle's part Veela ones?"

"NO! Of course not." Hermione gasped. "We...we haven't really discussed children..."

"Winky has." muttered Harry.

Hermione glanced at Harry and then back at Fleur's grandmother. "As I was saying, we really haven't discussed children but I would hope that..." she looked at Gabrielle and then Fleur before returning her gaze to Aglaia "that we all consider any of our children to be all of our children."

Aglaia smiled. "I know now..."

"And you could 'ave just asked Gabrielle are myself instead of zis...zis foolishness." Fleur said angrily to her grandmother. "Ermione...."

"Fleur, please." Hermione said softly and squeezed her bondsister's hand. "It's alright. I'd prefer to suffer any questions than for her to harbor any doubts about me."

"Sabastian?" Aglaia smiled at the man beside her. "Pourriez vous reparer ma robe?"

"Of course love." Her husband replied and pulled out his wand and started repairing the holes that had been created in Aglaia's dress where her wings had ripped through. When he'd finished, he spun her around playfully and kissed her on the lips.

"Merci mon chéri."

"Am I interrupting?" Said a male voice from behind them.

Harry turned when he recognized the voice. "Well who let the stray dog in?" He asked. "Thought you were going to be late Sirius."

"Might have, but what I needed to do didn't take as much time as I thought it might." Sirius replied. He then looked past Harry and his eyes lost a little of their focus. "And...uh...and who is the beautiful woman."

"Fleur's grandmother." Harry smirked. "That is her husband standing next to her."

"Gran....grandmother." Sirius replied in shock. He could not believe the woman could be anyone's grandmother.

"Oui." Gabrielle said as she playfully smacked the shoulder of her bondmate's godfather. "She is too old for you."

Introductions were made and as other guest arrived, they all were soon mingling on the back area next to the pool.

"My daughters are furious with you." Apolline said to her mother in French. She swirled her glass of white wine and drunk a swallow before continuing. "I can't believe you ambushed Hermione. Even after all that I told you? What were you trying to do, convince them to live in Great Britain instead of here?"

"I had to know Apolline." Aglaia responded with a sigh. "I had to see it in her eyes. You yourself had your own difficulties in her country."

Apolline grimaced as she remembered a time many years past. "I know."

"So what do you know about Mr. Black?"

"He's Harry's godfather which you know. He was Harry's father's best friend. Was falsely accused of betraying the Potters and spent many years in that disgusting Azkaban. He escaped and was recently cleared. According to Alain he inherited quite a bit of money from the Black estates. Why?"

"Do you know if he has any biases against Veela?"

"Doubtful, he loves Fleur and Gabrielle and his best friend is a werewolf."

"A werewolf? Really?"

"Why are you asking?"

Aglaia shrugged. "Just wondering if I should dissuade his interest in Bernadette." She motioned with her glass at the pair standing next to the pool talking. "It's been years since I've seen Berdine that...energetic in speaking to a man."

"Maybe she's just trying to get him to model for her line of Basilisk skin clothing." Apolline said. "Though she doesn't know it, he did spend the most time near it." But as she watched the two, she could tell by the casual way her old friend would reach out and touch Sirius on occasion, that there was more interest than business. "Well she could do much worse than Mr. Black." she said to her mother. She turned her attention back to her best friend and smiled. "She definitely could do worse.." she repeated in a murmur.

*** E E ***

Several hours later the dinner broke up and it was time for bed. Harry kissed Fleur and Gabrielle goodnight and made his way to his bedroom. He was brushing his teeth when Hermione opened her door to the bathroom. Harry stared. Hermione's bathrobe was tied loosely around her waist and it was obvious she only had her underwear on. In her hands was her sleep-shirt.

She stopped and gave Harry a nervous smile. "I...I thought it would be only fair if you got to see me as I saw you...right?" Her bottom lip burrowed under her lip at her nervousness.

Harry quickly rinsed out his mouth and looked at his best friend. He could see the Hermione's curves through the opening in the robe. The powder green bra lifted her breast to near perfect curves. "Only if you want love." Harry replied finally. "I...I know what you look like but if you're uncomfortable then you don't need too."

That assurance from Harry helped calm Hermione's nerves. She smiled. "I don't mind, but maybe..." She held the ends of her robe's sash out to Harry as she slowly walked closer to him, "you'd like to help?"

Harry took the ends and gently pulled. The simple knot parted and the robe fell completely open. Harry immediately realized it was different to see Hermione undressing for him than just seeing her nude. He reached up and slowly moved the robe from Hermione's shoulders and let it drop away.

"You're beautiful." Harry whispered as he gazed at Hermione who stood only in her bra and knickers.

Hermione's smile carried a hint of bashfulness but she didn't stop staring at Harry. "In the back." She said.

"What?" Harry asked in confusion.

"My bra, it opens in the back." Hermione explained as she turned away from Harry.

"Uh..." Harry said as he stared at the three hook and eyelet catches. "How...I mean..."

Hermione sent him an image of how the hooks were undone. Ten seconds later the catches were loose and Hermione held the bra over her breasts. She turned back to Harry and as she looked him in the eyes, she allowed the article of clothing to fall to the floor.

"Impressive." Harry said mimicking Hermione's earlier comment.

"Not disappointed?" Hermione repeated Harry's words.

"Never." Harry replied and he kissed his bondmate and best friend.

A/N:In my profile is a link to a picture of what I am thinking of with the wandring necklace. The top part can be almost any regular necklace.

Chapter 42

*** July 15th 1995 ***

The sliver of moon delivered just enough light to cast eerie shadows of the leafless branches that stretched above Harry. He looked around, unsure where he was. Every breath left a white mist in the cold, damp air.

"Where..." Harry started to think as he stared around the darkness, looking for anything that wasn't a tree.

"RUN!" A voice commanded from the darkness. It seemed to be from everywhere, but nowhere.

Harry looked around in confusion, trying to find the voice, trying to make sense of what was going on.

Again it came. "RUN!"

Still Harry could not see anyone.

"RUN!" the voice came again. Even the darkness seemed to waiver as the voice echoed away.

"WHERE!" Harry shouted in frustration.

"Stand still and you'll die."

A scream pierced the air. Harry turned in the direction he thought it had came from just as another scream shattered the silence. This time the scream turned into an agonizing wail. "NOOOoooooo..."

Harry recognized the voice. "Gabrielle? WHERE, WHY?" He immediately looked into his mind searching for his bondmate and found...nothing. No bond, no love, nothing. A sudden chill developed in the pit of Harry's stomach. As the darkness loomed around him, he felt very much alone but he knew he had to get to his bondmate. His feet acted without a conscious thought and he started running. As soon as he started toward the distant sound, it disappeared. Silence descended again. Harry could hear every heartbeat and breath he took. His ears strained for any sound to let him know how close he was.

Again the scream came and this time it was much closer. Harry now could see what appeared to be a light coming from a clearing ahead.

"Light!" Harry thought. "Why didn't I..." He reached into his pocket for his wand only to find it missing. His mind battled, should he go forward to Gabrielle or back for his wand. It was a short fight. He continued toward the sounds of his bondmate. He broke into the clearing that seemed to be lit by some magical light that had no source. There in front of him was Gabrielle lying on the ground and standing beside her was a man with long blond hair.

"YOU!" Harry screamed at the man, the man who was supposed to be dead.

Lucius Malfoy turned and smiled at the Boy-Who-Lived. "Well, well if it isn't Harry Potter." The man sneered. "Here to rescue this...this thing? This creature? Too bad you're too late." His lips curled into a cold smile. "Now for the others." With a swirl of his cloak he disappeared.

"Too late." Those words hammered into Harry's mind as he ran toward his youngest bondmate.

"Gabrielle." He said desperately as he knelt beside the young French witch. He could see blood seeping from under her fingers that clutched at a wound in her chest. "Don't worry, I'm sure it will be alright. I...I just need to get help."

Gabrielle's eyes had a vacant look as if not seeing, then they seemed to focused onto Harry. "I...I love you 'Arry Potter." She whispered in a quiet raspy voice and with those words her eyes lost all of their focus and her head slumped to one side.

"NO! Gabrielle..." Harry looked around for help and as he did the clearing that had surrounded him changed. He now was back in the graveyard and when he looked back down it was Fleur that lay in front of him.

Fleur's face was dirt stained and a large gash leaked blood from her neck. Her breath was ragged and shallow. As he stared at her, trying to figure out what to do, she lifted her blood covered hand weakly toward Harry and clutched his robe. An attempt at a smile

crossed her lips as she started to speak "I love..." but she never finished the words as her eyes also lost focus and stared at nothing.

Harry felt the hand slip from his robes as a cold settled into his stomach. As he stared at his dead bondmate, everything around him shifted again. Harry was back in the clearing in the woods and this time it wasn't Gabrielle, it was Hermione looking up at him. His heart felt like it was caught in a powerful force, squeezing the very essence of his soul.

"Hermione...no. Please you have to live." He cried. He could feel the tears welling in his eyes but his plea went unanswered as his best friend's almond colored eyes lost their light and her body slumped lifelessly.

Harry continued to stare into Hermione's dead eyes as grief overwhelmed him. "No.." The word came out as a whisper. "No.." A little louder. "NO!" This time it was a shout. Harry turned his eyes to the sky and yelled. "NO!"

"Harry." A voice called. "Harry, wake up. Wake up, please." the voice called again this time sounding worried. "You're having a nightmare, wake up."

Harry's eyes opened and he found himself in a moonlit room. He felt damp and cold, as he had in the forest. He felt a hand shake him again as Hermione called. "Wake up..."

Harry looked toward his bondmate. He could see the fuzzy outline of Hermione. Her eyes, though blurry, were filled with life and of worry. "You're alive." He said, as he reached his hand out for her.

"Yes, love." Hermione replied.

"I couldn't save you." Harry explained as the helpless feeling he had had washed over him again. "I...I couldn't save any of you." At that he sat up. "Fleur...Gabrielle?"

"They're fine." Hermione said as she wrapped her arms around Harry. "It was a dream, a nightmare. I've been trying to wake you."

"You...all of you died." Harry repeated as he closed his eyes. In his mind he could still see each of his bondmates dying and he still felt

his inability to prevent it. His arms responded to her and he pulled her close. "I...I can't lose you."

"You won't."

"I need to see them." Harry said looking in the direction of the door. He already knew they were there, safe. He could feel them in the bond, but still he needed to see Fleur and Gabrielle. He started to pull the covers back.

"No, you wait here." Hermione said as she pushed at him before she started to leave the bed. "I'll get them."

"No...it's alright." Harry said as he reached to stop her. "No need to wake them. I'll just go..."

"Yes, I do. We all need to see your nightmare." Hermione said in her matter of fact voice.

"No." Harry exclaimed, horrified at the thought of his bondmates witnessing his nightmare. "It...it was nothing." He climbed out of bed and shrugged Hermione's hand from his shoulder as she tried to stop him. He quickly pulled on his pants and walked out of the room.

"Harry." Hermione mentally said with some exasperation. "Let us help."

"Go back to sleep." Harry said as he made his way down the steps and out the back door. "I'm fine."

It wasn't too long before Harry found himself on the beach watching the almost full moon hang over the sea. The constant sound of the waves moving in to spill their water before they receded back into the sea settled his mind. It wasn't long before his mind returned to the dream, the nightmare. The emotions of fear, despair and loss he'd felt came back as he watched his bondmates die again. Harry was so caught up in his thoughts that the touch on his shoulder startled him. He looked back to find his three bondmates standing behind him looking back at him. In each of their eyes concern flickered in the moonlight.

"She had to wake you?" Harry said as he looked at Hermione.

"Oui." Fleur replied. "We would 'ave been angry wiz 'er if she 'adn't."

"It was nothing." Harry said without looking at her. "Just a nightmare."

Fleur said nothing. None of them did. For several long seconds only the sounds of the sea could be heard.

Finally Harry's gaze looked from one bondmate to the other, all standing side by side, waiting, with their hair blowing in the night breeze. "What do you want? Go back to bed."

"Non." Gabrielle replied. "We spoke of zis before. You're not going to blame yourself."

"Do you think we don't fear losing you as well?" Hermione added. "We've already thought we had..."

"But you..." Harry started then his voice dropped to a whisper barely heard over the waves lapping at the shore, "you were dead."

"No...you only saw us dead in a nightmare." Hermione corrected him.

"YOU WERE DEAD!"

"We saw ze nightmare." Fleur added. "We saw what you saw, and zat was what it was, a nightmare. Possibly your mind reacting to what Marl said. 'E forced you to zink about me dying again, about all of us dying."

Harry realized they hadn't shown up until after he'd thought about his nightmare, relived it. "You waited on purpose, didn't you?" He accused the three young women. "Waited until I had replayed the nightmare in my mind."

"Oui." Fleur admitted with a shrug of her shoulders. "You can't run away 'Arry. We are going to feel your pain. We 'ave to share and live if we are to be 'appy."

Harry wanted to be angry, but he couldn't find it in himself. He could only find the love he had for the women in front of him. He let out a sigh as he surrendered, and found his fiancées with their arms

around him. When they finally made it back to bed, all four of them stayed with Harry.

****E E****

"Good Morning Severus." Dumbledore said as he welcomed the Potions Master into his office. He could see the weariness in the man's face.

Snape only nodded as he took his seat.

"He called?" There was no question to who 'he' was.

"Yes." Severus replied. "Last night."

"Harry?"

Severus shook his head. "No, not yet. He's focused on the prophecy, I think. He was quite brutal last night in pulling my memories of that night at the Hog's Head. He wanted to make sure I hadn't forgotten to tell him a single detail."

"You're still safe?"

Severus nodded. "I was able to guide his probe, but, as I said, it was very unpleasant."

A pained look appeared in Dumbledore's eyes. He knew the risks and suffering the man endured for the sake of the war. "Any idea of what his plans are?"

"Possibly. While he was rummaging in my mind, I managed to glimpse what he was thinking. It seems Rookwood described the Hall of Prophecy to him in the past."

Dumbledore sat back and considered that information. He remembered Augustus Rookwood. No one had suspected him of being a Death Eater until Karkaroff had identified him. It was the reason the Durmstrang Headmaster had been released. "So Tom knows where he can find the prophecy. I wonder if he was told who could retrieve it?" Albus considered what he should do with the information. "Should I tell Amelia?" After a minute of silent contemplation he realized he couldn't. "It would only bring attention

to the prophecy and also possibly put Severus in jeopardy if Tom realized he saw what he was thinking." Dumbledore's eyes returned to his Potions Master. "Not surprising, anything else?"

Snape brushed his greasy hair out of face before he answered. "As you can imagine he finds some of the news...annoying. I do not know if that means he'll act, though."

Albus nodded but didn't comment.

"Also, though it has nothing to do with the Dark Lord, I should inform you that I am being followed. I think it is Aurors."

"Yes, it seems Amelia Bones has a report of all of those who responded that night." Dumbledore said. "You were there and nothing I say will dissuade her from investigating you. Be careful. I think you know the precarious situation you are in."

Snape's dark eyes glared at the Headmaster for several seconds. "Yes, I do." He said finally as he stood. "If that is all, Headmaster?"

"I think so. I'll call an Order meeting tonight to discuss what you have said."

Snape nodded and with a swish of his cloak he turned and disappeared out the door.

Dumbledore continued to contemplate what Riddle might do about the Hall of Prophecy.

"Maybe the Order should keep watch. It might lead to those who are Death Eaters in disguise at the Ministry."

*** E E ***

Harry awoke the next morning surround by the women he loved. His mind replayed the nightmare, but now, with the sunlight streaming into the room, it was easier to deal with. He could still see each of his bondmates dying in front of him, but as he looked around he could see and feel each of them. They were safe.

"It was just a nightmare." He thought, but he knew that he would never forget what he'd seen. "Marl is right though, staying alive,

keeping them alive is what I need to be concerned about." He remembered the wording of the prophecy. "But until Voldemort is dead, dead by my hand, we are all in danger." He looked again at his bondmates who were starting to stir. "I need to be better."

Since they were going shopping later, they decided to run before breakfast. The next hour proved to be a comical fiasco that lightened the mood from the previous night as they attempted to run while levitating rocks as Marl had directed. As Sirius sat on the front porch drinking coffee heckling them mercilessly, the bondmates fought with rocks that fell out of the air after only a few steps. If they were able to concentrate on the magic to keep the stone in the air, they found themselves running off the path and into hedges or just tripping over their own feet. After an hour they finally called an end to their endeavors. Hot, sweaty, physically and mentally exhausted, they slowly climbed the steps back to their rooms desperate for cooling showers.

"You 'ave your portkeys?" Alain asked the teens right before they entered the floo for their shopping trip. As they each held up a octagon shaped gold coin he nodded. "Remember you need to touch both sides of it and say..."

"We know Papa." Fleur said. "You went over it last night. We 'old it and say.." She paused to make sure no one actually was holding the coin the 'right' way, "we say 'Stag, Osprey, Otter, Doe' or 'Cerf, Balbuzard, Loutre, Biche'. When activated, ze portkeys will take us to ze Ministry."

Alain smiled as he nodded. He'd let them set the portkey activation phrase. It needed to be something that could be remembered easily but not said carelessly. The patronuses in order: Harry's and then eldest to youngest of his bondmates, worked perfectly. "Just don't mix the English and French."

Fleur rolled her eyes at her father. "We won't. Can we go now?"

"Of course." Alain replied as he gave each of the young women a hug and a kiss on the cheek," Then he got to the man who was standing next to them. "You're actually going with them?" Alain asked Sirius.

"I'm not actually going to stay with them; I just wanted to look for some new clothes." Sirius replied. "If they get into trouble, at least I'll be close by."

"I'm sure it 'as nozing to do with ze fact zat Bernadette's is located on Rue de la Ménagerie Magique." Fleur said to the others. They had all seen him with the witch the previous night. This caused all of them to grin as they glanced at Sirius.

"Now 'Arry, 'Ermione are you sure you can say ze location? 'Rue de la Ménagerie Magique.'" Apolline asked. "Say it slowly to make sure. No need to hurry ze pronunciation."

Harry had floo'd several times since that fateful day from the Weasleys when he ended up in Knockturn Alley but the Marseille magical shopping center was connected to the floo network by its French name and the Delacours were concerned about mispronunciation.

"Rue de la Ménagerie Magique," he said, and got a nod from Apolline. "Fleur's going to help me anyway."

"If you do end up elsewhere just let one of ze ladies know where you are." Alain said. "If zere is available floo powder you can immediately return 'ere, or wait and we'll come to you."

Harry nodded.

"Apolline, why don't you go first?"

Apolline smiled as she took the floo powder from the decorative glass jar that sat upon the mantle. "Oui." She said she threw the powder into the flames. She wasted no time in stepping into the fireplace and calling the destination. With a whoosh she was gone in the green flames.

"Harry?"

Harry grabbed a handful of floo powder and tossed it into the flames. The flames turned green as they rose above his head. He stepped into the fireplace. Fleur gently said the location again in his mind which he repeated out loud.

"Rue de la Ménagerie Magique" and he was sucked out of the Delacours' fireplace.

A grunt escaped his lips as he hit hard upon the stone in front of a fireplace. He reached to straighten his glasses which were askew on his face. He looked up and was relieved to see Apolline there smiling at him.

"You really must learn to exit a floo." She said kindly as she offered her hand.

"All I was ever told was to keep my elbows in." Harry said as he took her hand and scrambled to his feet. "No one has ever said how you're supposed to exit one."

"No one?" Apolline asked. "Surely whoever first showed you..."

"No..." Harry started to reply just as the flames rose green again and Gabrielle walked smoothly out of the fireplace.

"Ze key is to step into the exit." Apolline said.

"What do you mean?"

Apolline concentrated on a way to explain what she meant. "Ave you ever ridden a vélo...eh...bicycle?" She asked finally.

Harry shook his head. "My cousin had one, but I was never allowed to ride it."

"But you've seen 'im ride it?"

"Yeah, I suppose." Harry replied trying to figure out what Fleur's mother was suggesting.

"Did you ever see 'im stop?" Apolline asked as the flames once again rose and Hermione stepped out. "You see when you ride a bicycle, right as it's stopping you learn to put your foot out and brace yourself from falling. It's ze same reflex to exit a floo, right as you come to ze end, you need to step out. Step too soon and you 'it your foot, too late or not step at all and you fall as you do."

Harry watched as Sirius and then Fleur exited the floo and noticed both were stepping out as they emerged. "Is it really as easy as that?" he asked himself.

As they patted the soot off of their clothes, Harry looked around to see where they were. The fireplace was located in the center of the cafe. Four fireplaces made up a massive center column while scattered around the well lit room were tables of various sizes. Several witches and wizards sat reading newspapers or magazines while sipping at drinks or eating a late breakfast. Outside of a few glances in the direction, no one seemed to pay them any attention.

"So where shall we start?" Apolline asked when their clothes were clean.

"Emeline's." Fleur said referring to the local wandmaker. "Marl suggested something he called wand rings. 'E also said zey 'ave to be custom-made for our wands so if we order zem now, maybe zey will be done before we leave."

"Zen after zat we should see about clothes? If tailoring needs to be done, it will give zem time." Apolline suggested.

"Is there a place to buy stuff like suntan lotion?" Hermione asked.

"Pourquoi?" Fleur asked. "I showed you ze sunblocking spell and you are allowed to do magic."

Hermione glanced at her bondsisters. "We might get tired during all of our training." Then to Fleur and Gabrielle. "It's a muggle custom for a boyfriend or husband to put the suntan lotion on the female. Would you prefer to cast a spell or have Harry rubbing his hands over your body?"

"Oui." Gabrielle and Fleur answered out loud quite energetically. "Eh..." Fleur continued. "I agree zat we might get tired of casting spells while we train. We should get a large bottle."

"I want my bikini." Gabrielle said.

"We'll all get new ones." Hermione replied. "I'm sure Harry won't mind helping us pick them out, would you, Harry?"

Harry remembered Hermione's bra falling to the floor the previous night and imagined her and his other fiancées all sporting bikinis. A smile crept over his face as he shook his head.

Sirius slapped his godson on the shoulder. "Try to get your eyes back in your head before too long. I'm afraid you're going to sunburn your eyeballs." He chuckled at his own joke. "Well, I'm off to find my new wardrobe."

"Bernadette's is out that door and to the left." Apolline said as she pointed toward a door. "It's about two hundred meters on ze right."

"If I get a chance I'll stop in and say hi to her." Sirius said nonchalantly as he strolled away. Everyone noticed that he didn't hesitate to turn left after exiting the door.

Emeline's, like Ollivanders, was a small store, but the front window displayed various wands of different woods along with pictures of the animals the cores of the wands came from.

"I wonder if they actually use the Heartstring of a Horntail." Harry pondered as he recognized the moving image of the dragon.

Inside, the walls were lined with glass display cases with additional wands in them. A witch was standing behind the counter helping a young boy who was obviously there for his first wand. It wasn't long before the boy was waving his new wand around excitedly as his parents watched him proudly.

When the family had left the witch looked at her newest customer and recognized Apolline immediately. "Bonjour, Madam Delacour."

Apolline just nodded toward the teens and took a seat.

"Bonjour." Fleur replied. She then started speaking rapidly in French, explaining what they had come for.

"Oui." The witch said finally with a nod and went over to a cabinet. She removed a tray that had several plain silver rings like the one Marl had shown them and many more decorative ones. Each had a place to thread the chain of a necklace through them. She picked up a wand and one of the plain rings and demonstrated how the wand

disappeared into the ring of silver. She then pulled it back out. She again spoke to Fleur in French.

Fleur turned to the others. "Emeline can do ze customization work today if zere are zings 'ere zat we want, otherwise she if we 'ave an idea of what we want, she 'as various artistic jewelers zat she can work with and 'ave zem ready within a few days."

"I want somezing like zis." Gabrielle said pointing at an angel with wings. The angel had a flowing skirt with a string of diamonds running down it. The wand was supposed to slip under the skirt. "But I want it to 'ave emeralds instead of diamonds."

"You do realize the suggestion that makes doesn't it?" Hermione asked her. "People might ask if that's Harry's wand."

Gabrielle frowned at Hermione in confusion. "Arry can put 'is wand in it anytime he wants as long as it fits." She said finally. Gabrielle took the demonstration wand and slid it into the opening. They were surprised when the wand changed colors and shape and morphed into the shape of the skirt, effective hiding the wand entirely. Gabrielle pulled at the bottom of the skirt and the wand reappeared in her hand.

"Zere." Gabrielle said happily. "Now no one would know if 'Arry's wand was in my...eh." She stopped when she finally realized what Hermione had been trying to imply. Her face turned a deep red but she didn't make any effort to change her mind about her selection.

Hermione couldn't help but glance at Fleur. Her eyebrows rose and she smiled.

Fleur returned her gaze and smile. Finally, curious about how the wand seemed to disappear, she turned back to the saleslady. Again she spoke quickly to her. When she finished she turned back to the others. "Eet is a simple charm zat 'ides ze wand. It can do zat with almost anyzing."

"I like that idea." Hermione said. "What are you thinking of?"

Fleur looked at Harry. "A flower of course."

"Lily?" Hermione asked.

"Would you mind?" Fleur asked her bondsister. "I would like it, but with it being..."

"Of course I don't mind." Hermione replied.

Fleur smiled at Hermione and quickly asked Gabrielle as well. When her sister gave her blessing as well, she turned to her bondmate. "Arry, would you mind if I got a lily?"

"I think it would be perfect." Harry replied. They smiled at each other for a few seconds before Fleur turned to the saleslady and started describing what she wanted. When she did, Harry looked at his best friend. "What about you Hermione?"

"I...I don't know." She admitted. "I thought of books, but I want it to be something like Fleur and Gabrielle. Something, well...something that's meaningful to you, but I...I'm just Hermione."

Harry's eyes met Hermione's and he took her hand in his. "You will never be just Hermione to me. I hope you know that. To me you are everything. You're the one who's been with me from the beginning and now I know you'll always be there, until the end."

Hermione smiled. She had been a little jealous of Harry's pet names for her bondsisters but she knew he truly believed what he'd just said. As she stared at her bondmate, she remember his words. 'Everything, beginning and end' an idea hit her. "Everything." She whispered. She looked at her older bondsister. "Fleur can you ask her if they can make..." She thought of how she wanted it to look, "A line of books, encyclopedias actually. The first will have an A and the last will be Z. Probably only five or so books, alternating gold and silver." She looked at Harry, "Harry please pass this image to Fleur." Hermione visualized what she had in mind and sent it to Harry.

"Can I make one suggestion?" Harry asked as he saw what she was imagining.

"What?"

"The middle three books, can they have H,J,P?"

"Oh, you want your initials on my pendant do you?"

"Maybe." Harry said with a smile. "But wouldn't it someday stand for Hermione Jean Potter?"

Hermione looked down at her left hand and frowned. They had decided to leave their engagement rings at home just in case they were recognized. She looked back at her husband-to-be and smiled. "I like it. Besides, it suggests that just possibly you're everything to me as well."

"What about you 'Arry?" Gabrielle asked.

Harry looked over the assortment of wand rings. He saw one with three poles with small objects resting between them at the top. "Well this one could signify you three." He said pointing to it.

"I think that is supposed to be a wicket." Hermione said. "They are used in the game cricket. Of course if you've ever read Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy... " Then she remembered that it was highly unlikely Harry would have read those books.

"Hitchhikers...?"

"Nevermind, it's a fabulous series of books. Five of them make up the trilogy."

"Five in a trilogy?" Fleur asked with a raised eyebrow.

Hermione smiled at Fleur. "I'll let you read them and you'll understand."

Harry's eyes continued to roam over the assortment of wand rings.

"Ow about zis one." Gabrielle suggested as she pointed at one. It was a dragon encircling a white cylinder.

"I like that one but how about it being Horntail?" Hermione asked.

"Oui, a silver 'orntail wiz green eyes."

"But..." Harry started. He wanted it to be something about them.

"And ze zing inside can have our birthstones or maybe etches of an angel, flower and encyclopedias." Fleur added. "Ze 'orntail can you protecting us."

Harry nodded and decided on the birthstones. Fleur and Gabrielle described the entire order to the Wandmaker, including three plain wandrings that could be used when the plain rings were desired. Emeline took their wand measurements and assured them the plain ones would be done that day and she'd contact them when the custom pieces were completed.

The rest of the day passed quickly. After an early lunch at an outdoor cafe, they spent most of the afternoon selecting entirely new wardrobes for Harry and Gabrielle as well as a fresh assortment of summer clothes for Fleur and Hermione. Harry favorite part was the selection of the bikinis.

They found Sirius still at Benadette's. He joined them as they went back for their wandrings and then for dinner at an upscale restaurant.

As Harry was looking around the dining room, he noticed a pair of gentleman he'd seen earlier in the day. As he thought about it he remembered seeing them more than once. He remembered them being at the cafe at lunchtime as well.

"I think we're being followed." Harry said to his bondmates. "The two men sitting three tables to my left."

"We can tell maman and 'ave 'er tell papa." Fleur suggested. "E can have Aurors 'ere."

Harry's eye flickered over toward the gentleman again. They didn't appear to be watching them. "Not yet." He said. "What if they aren't following us and it's just a coincidence? Even if it proves to be a false alarm they'd probably stop letting us come to out."

"We should tell 'er."

"How about we tell Sirius?" Harry suggested. "He'll keep an eye out for us."

"Harry, we really should tell someone." Hermione said. She wasn't sure if Sirius was the best choice.

"We are, we'll tell Sirius." Harry said. "Look, if Aurors showed up and started questioning them about us, it would draw attention to us. Isn't that exactly what we don't want?"

Hermione sighed. It made sense but she still didn't like the idea of people following them. She glanced at Fleur who shrugged back.

It was a short time later when Apolline excused herself to go to the bathroom that Harry quickly told Sirius about the men.

Sirius glanced quickly over and back. "I don't think they're Death Eaters but you may be right. Tell you what, I'll go distract them and you four go out that door." He pointed to a different door than the one they had entered. "Wait, better yet, Hermione stay with me. If they try to follow the rest of you, she can let you know. If they are trying to follow, get to the floo as quickly as you can and get back to the Delacours. Don't wait for me, Hermione or Apolline. If that happens, Apolline can make sure Alain knows and is waiting."

Harry looked at his bondmates. Slowly each of them nodded. "Ok, Sirius."

As Sirius and Hermione made their way toward the strangers' table, Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle prepared to move quickly. Their napkins were sat on the table and they sat ready on their chairs.

As soon as Sirius started to ask the gentleman a question, the other three left the table quickly and started toward the second door. Distracted, the two men at the table didn't notice them until they were almost gone.

"Pardon Monsieur." One of the men said as they both started to get to their feet.

"They are following you." Hermione mentally yelled to Harry and her bondsisters. "RUN!"

That was all Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle needed. They pushed out the door and started running down the street.

Back in the restaurant, Sirius had grabbed one of the men and pulled him to the ground. The other was yelling something in French

that neither Sirius nor Hermione could understand. As the other people who were eating; rushed to leave the dining room, two more men tried to get through the front door.

Apolline wandered out of the bathroom into total mayhem. She could see Sirius was on the ground wrestling with a man while another man had his wand out and was trying to aim it at Sirius. Hermione had a firm hold of that man's arm preventing him from being able to aim the wand. The other patrons in the restaurant were trying to fight their way out both doors while two more men were fighting the outgoing crowd trying to get in. As she looked around frantically, Apolline could not see Harry or her daughters anywhere.

Apolline immediately pulled her own wand out attempting to aid Sirius and Hermione.

"Halt, Madam." That came in French from one of the two men who had just entered the restaurant. "Aurors." As she looked quizzically at the man, he held up an identification card that she recognized.

"Help them." Apolline said pointing at Sirius. "I am Minister Delacour's wife and..."

The other man had brought his wand up and a red light came out, hitting Sirius. He fell over stunned.

Apolline looked stunned. "But he's with me."

The two men Sirius and Hermione had been fighting reached into their pockets and pulled out matching identification cards.

Hermione looked stunned. "What?"

"Madam Delacour, we must find your daughters and Harry Potter." One of the men said. "We are under orders to follow you today. This man Black I think his name is, tried to distract us..."

Apolline held up her hand and turned to Hermione. "What happened?"

"Harry noticed these men had been following us, well thought they had anyway. We didn't want to make a fuss just in case he was wrong. While Sirius tried to distract them, Harry, Fleur and Gabrielle

went out that door." She pointed. "When these men tried to follow, we thought they were...who are they?"

"Aurors, it seems."

Hermione's eyes widened but she continued. "Well when they tried to follow Harry, Sirius thought they...well they were bad guys and tackled one."

"Where's Harry and..." Apolline started.

"They are or were headed for the floo. I warned them and...oh no." She said. "They...I can't talk to them. Harry must be unconscious. I was too busy fighting." A panicked look came into her eyes.

"Alain's headed for the floo to look for them." Apolline said. After a few moments her face turned pale. It took her a couple of seconds to explain. "They aren't there...wait." She paused, "Fleur just floo'd and she's alone." Another pause. "Harry and Gabrielle have been..."

Harry glanced back as he followed Fleur out of the restaurant.

"Sirius will take care of 'Ermione if zere is trouble." Gabrielle said. "Maman will also have Papa zere in no time."

Harry nodded and followed Fleur who had paced them by several steps. It was then that Hermione's warning came.

"Urry." Fleur said as she looked back.

"Go, we're right behind you." Harry ordered.

After running down the street for several seconds Fleur turned her head again. "Par là." and turned down an alleyway.

Harry looked at Gabrielle questioningly. "Eets a shortcut." She explained as she turned the corner following Fleur.

Harry suddenly remembered their portkeys. "FLEUR," he yelled as he grabbed Gabrielle's arm, pulling her to a stop. "Fleur, use your portkey." As it always happened when they ran, Fleur had outdistanced Harry and Gabrielle since Harry always ran at Gabrielle's speed. He looked at Gabrielle. "Use your portkey. Get

back..." That was the last thing he could say as a red beam struck him in the back.

"ARRY!" Gabrielle yelled as she reached for her wand. She spun on the spot to face who had attacked her bondmate. Two men were only a few meters away with their wands up. "NON!" But she cried fell to the next stunner.

Fleur stopped when Harry had mentioned the portkey. She dug into her pocket to find the coin, as she did her sister's yells echoed down the alleyway and she turned to look. Two men with wands out were standing over her bondmate and sister. She turned to start back trying to call to Hermione but remembered with Harry unconscious she couldn't talk to her.

"There she is." One of the men said in french as they looked at her. "That's Delacour's daughter. I told you it was her. Get her. She'll be worth a few galleons."

"Come here gorgeous." One of the men called out. "We just want to have a word."

Fleur looked around; trying to find something she could use to help. She thought of her allure, wondered if it would work but then shook her head. They knew who she was and probably her heritage. They wouldn't get close enough. She saw the movement just in time and dove out of the way of the stunner.

"Henri." Fleur heard as one of the men addressed the other. "Look at this kid, his forehead. Forget Delacour this is Harry Potter." He must have next motioned to Gabrielle because he then said " Bet this one must be important too."

Fleur glanced up just in time to see one of the men grab Harry while the other Gabrielle. With a turn they both were gone. A sense of despair crossed her mind, but she fought it down. She knew she had to get to her father. She pulled out her portkey and said the activation passwords. A few seconds later she found herself in the entry of the Paris Ministry of Magic. She looked around to grab her bearings and started running toward the exit room. She cursed with every step that the layout that provided such a good defense, prevented her from getting help quicker.

She entered the exit room, quickly told who she was and floo'd to her house. "PAPA!" She said seeing the man she most desperately needed standing there. "Arry and Gabrielle were taken."

***** E E ****

"...and that is what Severus reported." Albus Dumbledore was saying at the Order meeting a little later that evening. "Though as I've told you previously, I can't risk telling you what the actual prophecy says, it is imperative that Voldemort does not get his hands on it. I think we need to keep a watch on who enters the Department of Mysteries."

"How are we going to do that?" Emmeline Vance asked.

"Alastor has several Invisibility cloaks he collected over his time in the Aurors." Dumbledore explained nodding over at the ex-auror. "We can rotate watching the entrance into the Department of Mystery. I'm sure Arthur can provide us with a list of the people who should be there." He looked around the table until his eyes came to rest on one person. "Hestia, if you'll get with everyone and figure out a schedule."

The black-haired witch nodded as she looked around the table.

"It is also possible that Harry will be back in country next week. The Minister wishes to award him and Miss Delacour the Order of Merlin second class. I am going to France tomorrow to discuss it with them."

"He'll be staying here won't he?" Molly Weasley asked.

"I would presume so Molly, but I do believe that both of the young Delacours will also be with him if he does come."

"I...I Albus please tell him, I mean them that I would like to apologize."

Dumbledore nodded. "I'm sure they will be most relieved."

"Will they be back for the rest of the summer?"

"I doubt it." Dumbledore replied. "As you know it's not a guarantee he will be back at Hogwarts." He'd wanted to keep that part quiet, but Sirius had let it be known when he'd been in an argument with Molly about the Veela. "But it is one of the things I'll be asking them tomorrow. I'll need to know if the older Delacour will be accepting my offer to instruct at Hogwarts. Of course I'm still looking for a Defense teacher anyway."

"Fleur, uh I mean Miss Delacour is going to be teaching?" Bill Weasley asked as he looked up suddenly.

"Yes, in more of a tutor or semi-official role to help the students who have less than stellar defense instructions in the last few years. She'll work with the Defense instructor to find out how she can help."

"Well if you really need a Defense Instructor, maybe I can help out." Bill offered. "I did get an O in defense and as a curse breaker I think I have enough field experience."

"Thank you." Dumbledore said. "I'd prefer to continue to use your liaison to the Goblins..."

"I can just take a year off. I'd still be an employee there and would still have my contacts."

"Well in that case, it might work." Dumbledore said. "We'll discuss it further when I get back from France." At the nod from Bill he looked around the table once more. "Does anyone else have..." He never finished the sentence because Sirius and Arthur Weasley burst into the room.

"Dumbledore," Sirius started. He looked a bit frantic. "Harry was captured."

As the entire order burst into noise, Dumbledore felt a cold fear develop in his stomach, but he knew he could not let it show. He kept his facade of calm and replied. "Captured? Death Eaters in France?"

"No, well we don't think so. It happened about an hour ago. It...it was my fault." Sirius said. "I...well I'll tell you later. Right now we need to go. We couldn't contact you because you were here and it wasn't something I wanted to blurt out over an open floor to Arthur."

Alain is asking you to come and bring your pensieve. Gabrielle was captured as well, but Fleur made it home and he wishes to see her memories."

"Of course."

"I've already sent word to the French Ministry that we'll give full cooperation." Arthur said. "They know to ask if there is anything we can do."

"Thank you. Sirius, I presume you'll be accompanying me back?"

"Yes." Sirius replied as he held up two yellow stones. "Emergency International Porkeys."

Dumbledore was already rising from his chair.

"Find him Albus." Molly pleaded as she dabbed at her eyes where tears had appeared. "Find both of them."

Last Chapter

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Chapter 43

"The men in the restaurant were after you." Alain said to his daughter when she'd explained what had happened. "They were Aurors; I presume the ones that were assigned to watch you while you were shopping."

"WHAT? What do you mean?" Fleur exclaimed.

"I had requested that Aurors watch you while you shopped."

At first Fleur's face went blank but as she realized what had happened, need not have, anger filled her eyes. "WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US? WHY?" But just as quickly, the anger left her eyes and wetness emerged. "Why? Harry and Gabi..."

Alain sighed, a sound that suggested he'd aged twenty years in a moment. "I...I wanted you to be free to do what you wanted, go where you wanted and not think of security for a while. The Aurors were told not to interfere at all as long as no threat was perceived. Obviously I was wrong, but we should discuss this later, first I need to report what you know and get someone working on finding them."

Alain quickly requested that his wife bring Hermione and Sirius home. When she told him that Sirius was being detained, Alain

immediately floo'd the Ministry. After explaining what had happened and that there was a much bigger problem, he was told Sirius would be escorted to the Delacour residence by the Senior Investigator.

While Alain waited, he turned back to his daughter whose expression broke his own heart. "I'm sorry. That is all I can truly say. I did tell your mother that you would be protected, but she did not inquire into the details." He let out another sigh. "I thought..." He paused for a moment as he ran a hand through his hair, "I thought that Harry would like some time to feel normal. You'd mentioned that he never got to go out shopping or things like that so I wanted him to enjoy himself. Do you think he could really relax if he knew you had four Aurors watching you? I did the same thing on Monday as well. You know, when you went for your rings? There were Aurors watching then as well."

Fleur swallowed as she blinked back the tears that threatened to fall. She knew her father had tried to do what was right and though she wanted to argue with him, she wasn't even sure if what he did really was a mistake. Harry would have definitely not been as happy as he'd been if he'd known people were watching him constantly.

"We will find them ma petite."

Fleur nodded through the wetness that still filled her eyes.

At that moment, the floo blazed high and Hermione walked out and a few seconds later Apolline followed.

Hermione moved to instantly to Fleur and they gave each other hugs. "Eet will be alright." Fleur said though her eyes did not have the same conviction as her words. "Papa will find zem."

"What happened?"

Fleur started describing the events one more time. "Zey were after me I zink." She said. "But zen zey realized zat it was 'Arry and...and I couldn't do anyzing."

Before Hermione could answer, the green flames of the floo erupted once more and short dark-skinned, dark-haired woman in Auror robes emerged. She carried herself with obvious authority. Underneath the fleur-de-lis on her left breast were two gold stars,

obviously signifying some rank. As she stepped aside, the flames flared again and Sirius emerged, followed quickly by two more people in Auror robes.

"Thank you for coming, Christelle." Alain said to the woman.

"Alain." Sirius interrupted before the lady could reply. "I'm sorry, this is all my fault."

"Sirius, we can discuss it another time, but eet is just as much my fault I do believe." Alain replied and turned back to the woman. He led her to Fleur and Hermione. "Christelle you 'ave met my daughter Fleur and zis is 'Ermione Granger, she is...very much involved with what is going on. Fleur, 'Ermione, zis is Madam Christelle Arceneau, ze senior Auror inspector."

Christelle looked at Hermione. "English?"

"Oui, Madam." Hermione replied. "I...I'm a friend of Harry and the Delacours."

"She is more zan zat, but we can go into zat later." Alain said. "Ze immediate problem is 'Arry Potter and my daughter Gabrielle."

"Zey were kidnapped? Wherefrom?"

"Oui." Fleur interjected. "I was zere, in ze alley in Rue de la Ménagerie Magique. Two men, zey...zey stunned zem and zen disappeared but I zink zey were really after me."

"Tell me what happened." Madam Arceneau instructed. "Tell me everything you can."

Once again Fleur recited the story. As she spoke one of the Aurors wrote notes on parchment. He'd ask her to pause every so often so he could catch up.

Christelle turned to one of the Aurors when the events had been verbally chronicled. "Get to that alley and see if you can trace the apparition and of course anything else you might find." She said in French. She then turned to the other one who was stashing the parchment and quill. "Get back to the Ministry. Call in every available Auror and even the ones not available. There's no telling

where they may be, but get them asking around, beginning with Marseille."

"Oui, Madam."

As soon as they departed, the floo erupted once more in green flames and another man stepped out. Fleur and Hermione instantly recognized him as one of the men, Aurors, from the restaurant. Christelle took him aside and conferred with him for a few minutes. She frowned and turned back to Fleur.

"Mademoiselle, I am confused. You mentioned zat 'Ermione yelled for you to run."

"Oui."

"Zere seems to be some confusion on zat point. Ze Aurors did not 'ear any yells from Madmoseille Granger."

"Eh..." Fleur looked at her father and then at Hermione.

"Christelle, 'ow familiar are you with Veela?" Alain said as he guided the senior Inspector away with Fleur and Hermione beside them. "Zere is something zat you need to know."

Ten minutes later a very puzzled Chief Inspector had a headache and hope. Fleur and Hermione knew Harry Potter was still alive but unconscious. If and when he did regain consciousness he'd be able to communicate with them, and she knew communication with a victim was the best possible lead.

"Well zat ability will 'elp tremendously." Madam Arceneau said. "I zink ze best zing to do now, outside of waiting for Monsieur Potter to awaken, is to get a good description of ze men who attacked you."

"What about a Pensieve?" Hermione asked. "With one of those, Fleur could show you her memories."

"What is zis Pensieve?" Christelle asked.

"Albus Dumbledore has a device that allows you to see memories." Alain explained.

"Wait, did 'e use it at ze ICS recently, when 'e explained about ze return of Voldemort to 'is country and resigned."

"Oui." Alain said. "Zat is ze device."

"Do you zink 'e would put it at our disposal?"

Sirius, who had wandered over to the group and begun listening, answered that question. "Yes, I am quite positive he will, to find my godson."

"Your godson? 'Arry Potter?"

"Yes, his father was my best friend." Sirius replied. He then turned to Alain. "He needs to know anyway. He can definitely help."

Alain nodded. "Oui, go talk to 'im. Use ze floo in my study."

Sirius was back in ten minutes. "I couldn't get Dumbledore on the floo. I did talk to Arthur Weasley and he said there was an Order meeting called for this evening. I'm going to have to go there."

"I'll floo with you to ze Ministry. I can arrange for Emergency portkeys to get you back more quickly." Alain replied. "Christelle, I shall return as quickly as possible. If you need anyzing, Fleur, Apolline or ze 'ouse-elves will be glad to 'elp."

*** E E ***

"Thank you for coming so quickly Albus." Alain said as the silver bearded Headmaster of Hogwarts exited the floo. He was surprised when, instead of Sirius, a pink-haired young female emerged from the floo next. He instantly recognized her as the Auror who had been with Gabrielle. As he turned to Dumbledore with a questioning look, Sirius emerged from the fireplace.

"Alain, I'm not sure if you remember Nymphadora Tonks." Dumbledore said with a hand out stretched toward the woman who was looking around the mansion in awe. "She was the Auror that..."

"Was with Gabrielle." Alain finished. "Oui, I remember 'er."

Tonks attention turned to the Minister at the introduction. "Sir, I'm still sorry that I didn't protect Gabrielle..."

Alain held up his hand to wave off the apology. "Eet is fine. I do not blame you for zat Mademoiselle Tonks, just as I can't blame ze Aurors today." Alain assured Tonks. "But I do not understand why you are 'ere."

"She's a Metamorphmagus, as well as a trained Auror." Albus explained. "I thought her skills might prove useful; though I don't presume to suggest anything, especially since I do not know the whole story yet."

"Any 'elp is appreciated as well as advice," Alain replied, "But please understand zat my people will be in charge."

"Of course." Dumbledore replied with a slight nod.

"You 'ave your pensieve? Everyone is waiting in ze salon."

Dumbledore nodded toward Sirius who was carrying a bag.

"Excellent, zis way please."

The salon was filled with many people. Fleur and Hermione were sitting on a sofa, both looking distraught. The house-elves were popping in and out, replenishing drinks and trays of food. Apolline was trying to appear busy but failing miserably at it.

Several men in French Auror cloaks surrounded Madam Arceneau while speaking in low voices. When she saw who had entered the Salon she immediately withdrew from the conversation. "Professeur Dumbledore, what a pleasure to meet you. Of course your reputation is world renown."

"Albus, may I introduce Christelle Arceneau. She is ze senior investigator at ze Ministry. She personally is taking charge of zis investigation."

"My pleasure, madam." Dumbledore said. "I would like to offer my assistance in any way possible. I also brought along a British Auror whose talents may be useful."

"What talents are zose?" Christelle looked past Dumbledore at the pink-haired witch; her first impressions weren't very favorable. Christelle wasn't very approving of the color pink, especially in hair.

"I'm a Metamorphmagus, Ma'am." Tonks replied nervously. "If you need someone to look like someone else, I'm your witch ma'am. I just need to know what they look like and I can duplicate their appearance. I'm not limited by time like Polyjuice and I can change fairly rapidly."

"Oui, I can see 'ow zat can be useful. I will keep your talents in mind." Christelle turned to Dumbledore. "About zis pensieve? I understand it allows us to see memories?"

"Yes Christelle." Dumbledore replied. "It actually can allow you to do two things: view a memory, or actually experience it."

"Interesting, can you set it up? We would like see ze events in ze alleyway as witnessed by Fleur Delacour."

They spent the next few minutes setting up the pensieve and getting the memories while also explaining the complete chain of events to Dumbledore and Tonks.

"We forgot about ze portkeys." Fleur admitted when they'd coaxed the memory free of her. "Arry finally remembered zem but...but it was too late."

"What's all the excitement about?" A voice called from behind them. Alain turned to see his old friend. Marl stood there in the failing light.

"Gabrielle and 'Arry were captured."

Marl scowled. "What did the kid do? Didn't he listen to me and run?"

Fleur and Hermione both flushed angrily. "WE DID RUN!" Fleur yelled. "ZAT'S WHY ZEY WERE CAUGHT."

"Zere was a mix-up in a restaurant zey were eating in." Alain explained. "Arry mistook ze Aurors zat were watching 'im for people following zem."

"AND WHILE SIRIUS AND I DISTRACTED THEM, THEY RAN." This time it was Hermione. "And...and now..."

"At first we forgot about ze portkeys." Fleur said as she reasserted her calm over her anger. "When we took a shortcut to get to ze floo faster...zey...zey were stunned. I...I tried to 'elp...but...but"

"Damn." Marl replied as he sat down. "What can I do to help?"

The Auror who had been sent to the alley to investigate returned at that time. He looked around the salon and immediately made his way to Christelle.

"Well?" She asked. "What did you find? Were you able to track the apparition?"

"We tracked their apparition to a public floo area." The Auror said in French. "They didn't go in the floo, but so many people apparate from those spots that following from there was impossible. We did interview several people there who remembered seeing a couple of men with kids, one blacked haired boy and one blond girl but presumed they were helping them get home. No one could give us a real good description."

"That's not a problem." Madam Arceneau replied. "We have that device," she motioned toward the pensieve, "and they say we can see the men clearly in Fleur's memories. I'd like you and the other Aurors investigating to come take a look. You'll know exactly what they look like."

"Here." Dumbledore said as he touched the Pensieve on several of the Runes on it. Fleur's memory started playing above the bowl. "If you only need to see the memory this will be faster. If you want to actually interact or experience the memory, you need to actually enter the basin."

The Auror watched as the memory played through. Dumbledore froze the image as the men faced Fleur. Finally the grim faced Auror remembered something when he watched Gabrielle get stunned. He reached into his robes and pulled out a wand. "We did find this."

"Zat's Gabrielle's wand." Fleur exclaimed.

"Thought so, and you could see in the memory where she dropped it." He turned back to the senior investigator. "I'm going back to the alley and surrounding areas. Now that I know who I'm looking for I might have more success."

Deeper into the night the investigation continued and still Harry never regained consciousness. Finally exhausted, Hermione and Fleur started sleeping in shifts so one of them would always be awake, ready if Harry should awake.

*** July 16th 1995 ***

Gabrielle blinked her eyes open. The first thing she thought was how much her head ached but then she realized her arms and most of her body hurt as well. She tried to move, to roll over and found she couldn't. Nothing felt right, even the room felt like it was moving slightly. The room itself was faintly lit by a dim light coming from a round window. It was frosted so she couldn't actually see anything.

"Looks like the little princess is waking up." A rough voice said; though he spoke French, it was not a typical French accent.

Gabrielle jerked her head around and found herself looking at a stranger. The man was sitting in a chair that seemed to move slightly. The man moved with the chair with practiced ease. He was middle aged, but had a face that seemed older. His eyes were dark with no emotions. "Who?" Gabrielle started to say but then all of the memories from the alley came flooding back. "Arry." She tried to whisper as she looked around frantically. She wanted to see her bondmate. She didn't realize no sound came out of her mouth.

The man could easily read the mouthed words though. "Harry? You don't mean Harry Potter do you?" The man guffawed. "You won't find him here. Last I heard, he was headed back across the channel. Guys who sold you to us mentioned that some guy was willing to pay a lot of money for him. Something about that Dark Lord over there." The man gave a slight shiver. "Glad I'm not selling to him. Not the type of people I prefer to work with."

"NO!" Gabrielle exclaimed as she started struggling trying to move. This time she realized her scream was silent.

"What? Can't hear you." The man chuckled in a menacing tone. "I know it's not for that kid. It isn't like creatures like you actually care about anyone. Yes, I know you have some Veela blood in you. I can feel your allure. Been around it for so long now it has no affect anymore. Now I'm not sure how much of a Veela you are, but I'll warn you not to try to go all bird on me. Those things around you are indestructible. You will crush your wings and possibly your ribcage. I'd prefer you arrive at our destination in one piece. They won't pay me if you're dead and it will be a lot less if you're damaged."

Gabrielle glanced down and noticed what was keeping her from moving. Her arms were pinned tightly to her side by three bands of metal that ran horizontally around her body. "HARRY!" She mentally screamed but knew he was not conscious.

"Don't be trying any of those Veela mind games either." The man said. "I don't have my wand and if I suddenly start acting strange, my partner will most definitely hurt you. SHE won't be affected."

Gabrielle swallowed in horror as his earlier words came back. "Sold you to us." Her maman and grand-mere had told her of the dangers to Veela in the world, the same dangers that idiot Malfoy had reflected on. "You're a whore, that's all creatures like you are really good for."

"Now you might want to know what's going to happen to you." The man now had a leer on his face. "As much as I'd love to keep you for myself, a young Veela is worth too much to ignore. Got a standing offer from a group in...well, somewhere. They make good use out of young Veelas like you."

"NEVER!" Gabrielle tried to yell, but again it fell silent in the air.

"Never, huh?" The man asked as again he read the silent lip movement. "Guess you'd probably die first?" He shrugged when she nodded vigorously. "That's between you and them. I really don't care once I get paid, but I can tell you that I've sold them others that made the same threat. Seems they have a few potions that change your mood, make you more...compliant." The man rose from his chair and moved it against the wall. "Well now that we've had a nice chat, I'll head back up top. My partner will be in soon to give you water and food. I'd advise you to eat and drink." He glanced out the window. "It's late morning, and the best time to leave is when most

of the fishing fleet heads out right before dawn. No one will pay us any attention in the darkness amongst all the other boats. So as I said, eat, drink and enjoy your last real day of life in your own country. You'll never see it again." He started for the door, just as he turned the lever to open it, he turned back. "Look on the bright side sweetheart: at least you're going to live. I doubt the same can be said for that Potter kid."

Fear gripped Gabrielle and for several minutes she fought to keep it under control. She knew she had to believe him that she'd probably die if she transformed. "Harry will come. I know he will." She said to herself. To pass the time she tried recall what the man had said and what she knew so she'd be able to tell him when he woke up. "I know I'm on a boat. That's why the room is moving." She now could hear the sound of the water hitting the side of the boat in rhythm to the rocking as well as a few sea birds.

*** E E ***

The vigil at the Delacour home lasted throughout the night. As the sun started to make an appearance through the salon windows, Fleur was sitting and Christelle, both on their second pepper-up potion, were looking at a map trying to determine what places could be searched next when footsteps came hurrying from the entrance hall.

"We found one of them." An Auror said excitedly when he entered the room.

Both Christelle and Alain looked up, expressions showing hope. "Gabrielle? Harry?" Alain asked.

"No." The auror said losing some of the enthusiasm he'd arrived with. "One of the men from the alley. The ones who captured them."

"Where? And has he said where they are?"

"No, we haven't spoken with him yet. We have his home surrounded though. I wasn't sure if you wanted him arrested or followed." The Auror replied. "Though a magical search shows he is the only one in there, so he doesn't have them with him."

"If he has them stashed somewhere, he might need to bring them food and water." Christelle mentioned as she looked at Alain.

"Or the other one might, or the other one is busy taking them somewhere. No, we need to bring him in and give him truth serum." Alain said.

"You heard the Minister, arrest him and take him to the Ministry."

"Yes madam." the Auror said and disappeared.

Shortly before eight am, a disheveled man wearing handcuffs was led into a plain room in the Ministry. Around a table sat Alain, Christelle, Dumbledore and Sirius. The Auror who led him was not the same one who had arrested him. He looked nervous as he addressed such high levels of people. "Eh...Madam, Deputy Minister he has taken a veritaserum antidote."

Alain cursed as he leapt to his feet. He knew it would be a minimum of seven-two hours before it cleared his system. By then his daughter and the boy he'd grown to love would probably never be found.

Dumbledore frowned as he put a hand upon Alain's arm. "My French isn't as good as I wish." Dumbledore said. He'd been unable to follow the conversation that had occurred. "May I inquire to what is going on?"

Alain quickly explained.

Maybe I can be of assistance then." Albus commented. "I am unfamiliar with the French law in this matter, but I am a master Legilimens. Unless the man is a truly skilled Occlumens I doubt he could prevent me from discovering the truth."

Christelle looked at Alain. "Deputy Minister, you'll need ze Minister's authority."

"Non, just do it." He instructed Dumbledore. "I will tell Pierre later.

"Minister?" Christelle asked.

"My job is not as important as those two kids. If Pierre wants me to resign I will." He looked again at Dumbledore. "Just do it."

Twenty minutes later Dumbledore sat back from the kidnapper whose name he'd discovered to be Henri. The man was now ashen faced and trembling. He'd fought Dumbledore but it had been to no avail. As he was led out of the room, Dumbledore turned to Alain. Though his face remained calm, his eyes betrayed very troubled thoughts. "I need to get back to the Pensieve to discover exactly what happened to Gabrielle. I do not know your language well enough to know what precisely was said. I do know she and Harry were separated. They were both sold to different people."

"Sold?"

"Again I did not understand everything being said, but there was an exchange of gold for each of them; Harry first and then Gabrielle. It could have been a reward, but it's the same thing in the end." Dumbledore explained.

Alain's blood chilled. He remembered that Fleur had mentioned they had called for her. At first he'd presumed it had been because she was his daughter, but the fact she was part Veela had never been a hidden fact. There had been several young Veela who had disappeared in the last couple of years. No bodies had ever been discovered and the thoughts went toward another possibility.

Slavery.

Though the ICW had declared Veela to have full rights and equality, many wizards only saw them as creatures, things to be owned and...used. The Deputy Minister sat still for several seconds as thoughts of what might be happening to his daughter ran through his mind. He finally took a deep breath and nodded. "Oui, we must find them and quickly."

As they were leaving the Ministry Dumbledore made another comment about what he'd seen in the mind of the kidnapper. "There is another thing that concerned me. I recognized the man who paid the money for Harry. His name is Yaxley and he's a very high level person in the Ministry, our Ministry I should say. I need to contact Arthur and warn him."

"Let's see ze memory first." Alain requested as they entered the departure room. "You can contact your Ministry while I and ze Aurors view eet,oui? We might recognize who 'as Gabrielle."

"Of course."

It was almost noon when Alain finished watching the exchange of gold for his daughter. His eyes, wet with unshed tears were also filled with determination as he exited the Pensieve. Fleur was there, preparing to watch the memory herself. Suddenly her eyes flew open wide. "PAPA, Eet's 'Arry, 'e's waking up."

At the same time in Alain's study Dumbledore was in front of the floo speaking to a very tired Arthur Weasley.

"Yaxley? Of course he's in France. He was supposed have already contacted you." Arthur said.

"What about?" Dumbledore asked.

"As soon as Sirius told me about Harry, I let Cornelius and Amelia know and they had me call in every department head. They were all told what had happened..."

"You told everyone, including Yaxley?"

"Fudge did. What's the problem Albus? Yaxley was the only one to get anywhere. He had an acquaintance over there who might know something. We gave him an international portkey and galleons for a reward if Harry's found. He was told to check in with the Auror department there and find you."

"Have you heard from him since?" Dumbledore asked.

"No." Arthur replied. "But I am surprised you haven't."

Dumbledore sighed. "Actually, I think the Ministry informed Voldemort," Dumbledore waited a second while Mr. Weasley flinched before continuing, "that Harry was vulnerable and actually gave him the means and at least some of the Galleons to secure him."

"WHAT?"

"I just finished probing the mind on one of the kidnappers. It was Yaxley who purchased or secured Harry with gold. He mentioned the Dark Lord when he did."

"You can't be serious." Arthur replied. "We...I gave..." The rest disappeared in a swallow clearly visible in the throat of Arthur Weasley.

"You couldn't have known and it's possible that I might be mistaken. He might have been trying to fool the person and has Harry, but...but I fear not. See if you can find Yaxley but keep it quiet. Let Amelia know. If Yaxley is a spy and can be caught, he might be the only way to finding Harry."

"I...of course." Arthur nodded. "I'll get on it now."

*** E E ***

"ARRY!"Screamed into the mind of Harry Potter from two different people as his consciousness returned. While his head was already filled with pain from the stunner, the screams felt like someone had stabbed his brain with a red hot knife.

"What..." He said out loud as his mind still could not process what he was hearing. His thoughts were a mass of confusions as his mind was trying to tell him what had happened at the same time as two female voices were clambering inside his skull.

"Do you know..."

"Aide-moi Arry! Zey are going to sell me..."

"Where you are? Zey 'ave..."

"Zere was a man and 'e said..."

As their thoughts and explanations, fears and hopes poured into Harry he felt overwhelmed. "Wait...please." He instructed as he tried to shake the cobwebs out of his mind. As he did, his body immediately started telling him that a lot more than his head hurt, his whole body was in pain.

"I have less zan a day..." This was from Gabrielle and carried distinct fear in her voice. "Ze man said ze boat would leave before tomorrow morning..."

"Boat, what boat?" By now Harry had opened his eyes and realized it didn't matter. He was in complete darkness. "What happened? We were running and..."

"ARRY!" Gabrielle pleaded.

"I'm here." Harry replied. "I'm listening but I don't understand. Fleur are you...where are you?"

"I'm at 'ome. Zey stunned you and Gabrielle. You both were captured."

"Gabrielle, talk to Fleur as well and... wait is Hermione alright?" Harry asked suddenly panicking as he started to remember what happened in the restaurant. "Was Sirius able to protect her?"

"Oui, ze men in ze restaurant were zere protecting us." Fleur said.

"WHAT? Wait, Gabrielle is talking to me. Gabrielle, tell us now, where are you?"

"Fleur, tell Papa zat ze man who...who 'e says 'e bought me is taking me on a boat. I'm on a boat somewhere." Gabrielle mental voice was saturated in fear. "Zere are zings around me zat 'e says if I lose control and...and transform, zey will crush me."

"I will ma soeur." Fleur replied and was silent for a few seconds as she obviously was telling her father.

"Show me your memories Gabrielle." Harry said. "I'll relay them to Fleur."

"Oui."

"Harry?" A voice called after Gabrielle was mostly finished with her memories. This voice, filled with fear and emotion was Hermione. "Please tell me you're alright?"

"I'm fine I guess, but right now Gabrielle is more important. She's in a lot more danger. Let me relay Gabrielle's memories to you and Fleur. They need to find her."

"And you, we need to find you too."

"I can wait." Harry exclaimed. "Gabrielle is more important."

"Fleur's telling Alain and Dumbledore, what about your Portkey?" Hermione asked.

Hope rose in Harry as he shoved his hand into his pocket, only for it to die a second later when he found it empty. "No," He replied heavily "it's gone."

*** E E ***

"Boat?" Alain asked. "Tomorrow morning? Why?" He realized almost immediately. "Not staying in Europe and we closed international magical travel. Zey take 'er to a different country and..." The rest didn't need to be verbalized. They both knew if Gabrielle was taken out of France it would be almost impossible to find her.

"He mentioned fishing fleets, so that at least suggests a larger port, one with a significant fishing but..." Christelle let out a sigh as again her eyes scanned the map of France, "that's still a lot of possibilities."

"We can get Aurors on the ground at every fishing port, maybe someone saw something." Mr. Delacour suggested.

"Risky, if word gets to them, they might slip out earlier than tomorrow morning."

"They know we are looking, so we keep asking questions in the cities as well. We just expand the questioning to the docksides."

Alain turned to Fleur and Hermione. "Let Gabrielle know we are doing our best and to let us know immediately if she 'as more information. What about 'Arry?"

*** E E ****

"I have my wand." Harry said to his bondmates. "It's in my wandring. Glad we got the concealment charm on it." He pulled it out and sent the hissing sound that activated the brighter light spell. "I'm in a small room, stone. One door with no windows. It's cold, a lot colder than it was at...at your home."

"Our 'ome, and you're going to be back 'ere soon." Fleur said. "You and Gabrielle."

Harry reached into his pocket and realized he didn't have his cloak. "No cloak. They must have taken it."

"No." Hermione said. "You asked me to carry it in my bag when you were trying on clothes. "

"That might be for the better. You know it was my dad's. If..."

"NON!" Fleur exclaimed. "Zere will be no IFs, you WILL come 'ome. You...you must come 'ome."

"I hear footsteps!" Harry exclaimed as he quickly doused the light of his wand. Voices were now evident.

"I saw light from under his door." A man's voice could be heard from beyond the door.

"I don't see anything now."

Harry paused, trying to decide if he should fight. He then remembered Gabrielle. He knew if he got stunned again or worse, it would be doubtful that they would find her in time. He needed to give Alain time to find her. He quickly slid his wand back into the ring and dove for the floor where he'd been. He'd just settled when the door creaked open.

"Lumos." A man's voice said and Harry could see his eyelids lighten through his closed eyes. He fought to keep them shut.

"See, he's still unconscious. You were just seeing things Goyle."

"GOYLE!" Harry screamed in his mind. "Must be his father."

"I'll make sure Dumbledore knows. He's here as well." Hermione told Harry. "Sirius went to get him."

"Maybe." Goyle replied and Harry felt a foot nudge him. He did his best to stay relaxed and let his body move, while at the same time preparing himself just in case the foot decided to kick him.

"Stay here if you want, but you know HE's going to be back soon."

"What's he going to do with him?" Goyle asked as he nudged Harry again with his foot.

"Nothing you or I would want to endure."

The two men left and pulled the door shut. A click was heard as they locked it. Harry waited a minute, not daring to breathe. Then, when he was positive they were not returning, he finally sat back up against the wall, staying in the dark this time.

"Did you hear it?" He asked. "Voldemort's coming. I've got to try to break out of here."

"Be careful." Three voices said inside of his head.

Harry climbed to his feet and felt his way along the wall until he reached the door. He put his ear to it and listened. After several seconds of not hearing anything, he pulled back out his wand. "Alohomora" he whispered, and a click was heard. He back away and waited, wand ready.

Nothing.

He gave a wistful thought about his invisibility cloak, but then steadied himself. He gripped his wand more tightly and opened the door slowly, flinching as the door creaked, swinging inward. Again he waited, expecting someone to rush in, but no one came. Though there was a distinct chill in the damp air, a bead of sweat rolled down Harry's brow. He glanced around the open door, his eyes welcoming the dim light that lit the next room. The light was coming through a very small window pane set into another stone wall. The window itself was filthy as if it was never washed. The room had the same dank feeling of his cell. In the corner of the room across from

where Harry was, a wooden staircase led upwards. As he strained his ears, he could just make out faint voices.

Harry first went to the window and realized it was too small to get out through. There were two other doors and he tried each carefully. Both lead to similar rooms that he'd been in, but both were empty. Harry realized he had no choice, if he wanted to escape it'd have to be up the steps. He just wished he knew how many people he faced. He slowly crept in toward the staircase.

*** E E ***

"I'm sorry Arthur, but..." Dumbledore paused as he tried to figure out how to tell Arthur about how they had communicated with Harry. "We have a way to communicate with Harry..."

"HOW!" Arthur broke in excitedly.

"It's...complicated, but trust me that we do." Dumbledore said. "I'll explain when I have time, but please do not tell anyone."

"Uh...of course not."

"Amelia knows how, so you can tell her, but we have been in communication with Harry. He regained consciousness recently. He is definitely in the hands of Voldemort. Did you find Yaxley yet?"

"Not yet, but we will." Mr. Weasley explained. "So...You-Know-Who has him?"

"Yes. I'm going to come back looking for Yaxley."

"Of course."

When the Floo connection ended, Dumbledore returned to the Salon. "Alain, I think it is best if I return to my country and concentrate on Harry."

Alain studied the Headmaster for a couple of seconds before nodding. "Of course."

"Miss Granger, could I entice you to come with me? So I can keep abreast of what is happening with Harry?"

"Yes, sir." Hermione answered at once as she glanced at Fleur who nodded back at her.

"What about me, sir?" Tonks asked. So far they had nothing she could help with, and she'd felt pretty useless.

"Stay, at least for now. I'll floo if I need you." Albus replied.

*** E E ***

Harry glanced up the steps and saw there was a door at the top. He placed a cautious foot onto the first step and slowly eased his weight onto it. He sighed his first breath of relief when it didn't creak. He took another step and then another. The fourth step let out a groan as he placed his weight on it. Instantly the voices ceased from above.

Harry quickly moved back down the steps, better to be in the dark of the cellar than in the narrow confines of the steps. He had just ducked into one of the other rooms, leaving the door open a small crack when the door to the cellar opened.

"Nothing." Goyle's voice called from above.

"Check on him again." The other voice called. "Nothing did not make that noise."

Harry could hear someone slowly descending the steps. He put an eye to the crack and could see the large body of a man starting toward the door he'd been kept in.

"Damn." Harry thought as he realized he never closed the door to room he'd been imprisoned in.

"YAX! THE DO..." Goyle yelled but never said anything else as Harry threw open the door of his room he was hiding in and yelled "Stupefy." Goyle Sr. only had a chance to turn toward the sound with wide open eyes before the red light struck him squarely. He collapsed onto the stone.

Harry ducked back into his hiding spot and waited...nothing. "Did the other guy not hear him or me?" Harry thought. After a few more

seconds, Harry understood. The other guy or guys knew Harry had to come up those steps to escape. He looked at the ceiling, wondering if he could figure out where the guy was. He then glanced again at the window. Wishing it was large enough to climb through.

"Defodio." Fleur said. "Digging charm. You can use eet to enlarge ze window."

Harry stopped and waited while Fleur went outside and started working through the charm. It was hard to concentrate, knowing the other person might come down the steps any second, but Harry forced himself to. Finally he was ready to practice it, which in this case meant using it for real. He aimed his wand at the window. "Defodio."

The window blew apart and a section of the wall broke into pieces. Harry stopped and listened. He could hear steps now. "Maybe I can make him believe I escaped this way and can catch him off guard." Again he sent the gouging spell at the window and more stone crumbled away. This time he heard the door open. Harry raced toward the window and pulled the loose stone away enlarging the hole. It wasn't large enough for him to crawl through but Harry hoped it was enough to convince the man he had. He let out a few grunts near the window and then quietly moved back to the room he hid in before.

"Potter?" The voice growled. A step creaked, and another. "I know you're down here. Don't make me hurt you boy. Toss whatever wand you have out and I won't hurt you."

"Yeah right." Harry thought. "You might not, but your Master isn't going to be so nice."

Another step creaked and another. Finally Harry heard what he wanted. A curse and much quicker movements as the man moved toward the window. Harry could now see through the crack made by the partially opened door a man he didn't recognize run across the room. Harry readied his wand and threw open the door.

"Stupefy." Harry yelled but this man wasn't nearly as slow as Goyle Sr. He put up a shield charm and blocked the stunning spell. Harry sent a cutting curse at the man who moved enough for it to miss.

Harry had to dive out of the way when the man sent a stunning spell back at him. He rolled as he hit the floor, scrambled back to his feet and ducked behind a stone column.

"Potter." The man said. "You can't escape, so throw out your wand and it'll be far less painful."

Harry didn't bother replying but searched for a way out of there. He remembered the summoning spell that Marl had did on him. He glanced at the window again and noticed some nice chunks of rock. He realized he was in the wrong spot to make it work though. He ducked to one side of the column and sent a stunning spell at the man the other guy had called Yax and then ducked back. When he heard him go to that side, Harry raced for a different stone column. He glanced again and this time he was in the right position.

"Accio" He commanded as he aimed his wand at the rock.

A curse from his opponent told him it had hit, but not enough to stun him. Harry used the distraction as an opportunity to race to the steps. A spell hit just behind him creating a noise like a hammer on stone. Harry didn't stop; he raced up the steps and through the door, slamming it behind him. A quick glance told him the room was clear, but he couldn't take the chance that no one was around. Just as he moved down the hall, the door to the cellar exploded into wooden splinters. Harry didn't look back but started running. He found what looked like the front door and yanked it open.

"Potter." The flat snake-faced figure with red eyes that stood there hissed in a cold voice.

It was only a second of panic that rushed through Harry, but that was all it took. "Crucio" came the hissed whisper.

Every fiber of Harry's body erupted in pain. It felt like he was being stuck with millions of red hot needles all at once. Even his very bones felt like they were on fire. His eyes rolled back in his head and his legs lost the ability to stand and he collapsed. As he hit the ground the pain stopped but his muscles still twitched.

As he lay on the floor he could only think of the three beautiful women he loved and would never see again. "I...I'm sorry. Find Gabrielle and...and take care of each other."

"Hang on Harry." This was Hermione in a voice that sounded very strained. "Dumbledore and I are back in London. Give us time to find you."

Harry actually found that amusing. "I don't think it's my choice how much time I have, but for you, I'll do my best."

*** E E ***

All of Harry's bondmates felt the torture curse, to somewhat lesser degree, but Dumbledore looked at Hermione who had suddenly collapsed beside him. "It...it's Harry." She strained to speak. "Cruci..." Finally her body relaxed from the knot it had constricted itself into. "Voldemort has...has him and just used the torture curse. I...I felt it."

"I don't think you got the full effect, but I understand." Dumbledore said. "If you can, ask Harry to give us time to find him." He reached into his robes and pulled out a small vial. "Here, drink this. It will sooth some of the aftereffects of that unforgivable."

Hermione uncorked the vial and down the liquid in one gulp. Almost instantly some of the aches started to disappear. She nodded at Dumbledore.

"Now what can you tell me about where Harry is?"

Hermione started describing the place Harry was located as he saw it. Suddenly her eyes flew open. "Voldemort has called the other Death Eaters. He plans on dueling Harry and...and killing him."

"Then we better hope that Harry can find his power."

"Sir, isn't there anything we can do?"

"Without knowing where he is?" Dumbledore asked. "No."

"We can't just... Winky!" Hermione gasped.

"Winky?" The Headmaster asked. "The house-elf?"

"She and Dobby came to our tent, a place they'd never been. If Harry were to call them couldn't they find him?"

"It would be suicide; even a house-elf can't apparate that quickly."

"It's a chance though, maybe Harry will get free long enough."

Dumbledore nodded. "We'll need to bring them here. They can't come through the international borders."

*** E E ***

"Now Harry Potter, we shall duel." Voldemort said to the black-haired young man. They were outside in a small cleared area beside a house in the middle of nowhere. It had taken several minutes after Voldemort had touched a finger to Yaxley's Dark Mark before the black robed and silver masked Death Eaters had appeared, but they had come and now they formed a circle around Voldemort and Harry. "I presume you know how to duel?"

Harry glared at the snake faced man and didn't reply but he raised his wand quickly. "LACERO!"

Voldemort lazily batted the spell away. "Oh, we can't have that." He said. "We must do this properly. First we need to bow to each other."

"Harry, call Dobby if you can." Hermione exclaimed in his mind. "We think he can get to you."

"I'll never bow to the likes of you." Harry snarled. He glanced around to see if there was anything he could do. The black robed men were all jeering now.

"I said bow." Voldemort waved his wand and Harry felt his spine being forced forward. All around them the watching Death Eaters jeered even louder.

"That's better, now we duel."

Harry didn't even get a chance to raise his wand before he was under the torture curse again. After what felt like hours, the pain finally stopped. Harry struggled to regain his feet over shaking legs.

"That was for the pain you caused me all those years ago." Riddle sneered. "This is for the pain you caused in the graveyard. Crucio."

Harry had his own wand ready this time. "LACERO!" He yelled trying to do anything he could instead of being forced through the pain again. As his spell rushed toward Tom Riddle, it seemed to hit something and stop. A gold beam of light came from the place it had stopped, stretching out toward Harry's and Voldemort's wand, connecting them. Harry felt his wand start to vibrate rapidly and his hand seized up around it. Even if he'd wanted to drop his wand he couldn't. As he stared at his wand in surprise, his eyes wandered to its tip and then they followed the gold light until he saw Voldemort also was gripping a vibrating wand, the eyes in his flat noseless face wide in surprise.

If he could have dropped his wand, Harry probably would have when the gold beam split into a thousand more beams, which arced high over the dueler's heads. They crisscrossed and finally settled into a golden web that formed a dome which enclosed the duelers.

"DO NOTHING!" Voldemort shouted to his followers. Harry could see astonishment and possibly fear in the red eyes of his opponent.

"Dumbledore says this is Priori Incantatem." Hermione said. "Your wands each have the same core and won't let you duel...but there will be a test of willpower."

A sound now filled the dome, one of hope. Harry recognized it. He wanted to look around for Fawkes but didn't dare take his eyes off Voldemort.

"No, it's not Fawkes." Hermione said. "Hold on Harry, we're almost ready. We have a plan."

The music seemed to speak to Harry as the hope it brought filled his heart. He also felt something else, the love of his bondmates. "I just have to hold on."

'Don't break the connection.' This seemed to be words formed in the music but no words were spoken.

"I won't." He said to the soundless voice, but as soon as he thought it, his wand started vibrating even more powerful than before. Beads

of light appeared in the golden beam that connected his and Voldemort's wand. A shudder seemed to come from his wand as the beads of light seemed to move toward him. Closer...closer the beads came and his wand vibrated even more. Then his wand started heating up, it grew hotter and hotter. Harry was afraid it would burst into flames in his hand. He was afraid of those beads of light; afraid his wand wouldn't survive being touched by them.

He remembered then that Hermione had said something about willpower and realized this was it. He concentrated on the light, focused every bit of his desire against them and they slowed and stopped. Then he felt it, his bondmates love. Even Gabrielle was sending it to him. A force inside of him grew and the beads of light started away from him. Slowly they moved...inch by inch and then faster. As the force inside of Harry grew from the love of his bondmates mixed with the hope given by the song the beads moved even faster. As the beads neared Voldemort's wand Harry could see the look of fear on the Dark Lord's face.

"Harry as soon as the lights touch his wand, break the connection and call for Dobby."Hermione said.

"But..."

"TRUST ME!"Hermione exclaimed.

Harry swallowed and willed the beads onward. Voldemort's wand began to shake even more violently. Just as they touched the tip of his wand, screams echoed from it. Voldemort's red eyes widened even further when a grey smoke started to form from its tip.

"NOW!" Hermione yelled in Harry's mind.

Harry yanked his wand upward severing the golden thread while at the same time yelling DOBBY!"

Fawkes appeared in midair right beside Harry with a noise that sounded like a crack. Instantly the Phoenix leapt into the air and dove directly at Voldemort, when he got within a foot of Voldemort's face he vanished into a flaming exit. Even Voldemort had to flinch at that coming on the heels of the wand display.

At the same time Harry felt a small hand take his. "Dobby is here, Harry Potter sir." And while every Death Eater had their eyes on the Phoenix attacking their master, Harry seemed to disappear with a crack.

"HARRY!" Hermione screamed as she threw her arms around him.

It took Harry a couple of seconds to realize that he had escaped. He looked down to see Dobby coming out from under the invisibility cloak while the air flamed and Fawkes appeared. As he wrapped his arms around Hermione he could see a beaming smile surrounded by a white beard under twinkling blue eyes.

Dumbledore.

"Welcome back Harry." The Headmaster said. "We should get you to Madam Pomfrey and let her look you over."

Harry shook his head. "No sir...we need to find Gabrielle. You hear, my angel? We ARE going to find you. Tomorrow morning, you are going to wake up in my arms.

"I know you will 'Arry."

Chapter 44

It was late afternoon when Harry and Hermione returned to the Delacour estate. Dumbledore remained in London to assist the Ministry in locating Voldemort's hideaway. Since Fawkes had been to the hiding place once, he could return and lead Dumbledore back there.

Fleur had put her arms around Harry and refused to let go again. Alain and Apolline were very glad to see him but the whole atmosphere of the estate was subdued. Grim-faced aurors arrived and departed bringing updates to Madam Arceneau who was busy marking off locations on the map in front of her.

"Sir," Harry started, "When will we find Gabrielle?"

"Hopefully soon." Alain replied but his eyes told Harry all he needed.

"How difficult can it be to find a single boat?"

A sigh escaped Mr. Delacour's lips. "Zere are many, many boats and many ports zat boat might be in. We 'ave everyone on eet, but...'ere look. Just zis area 'ere is just around Sète, look at all zee locations a boat could be. We are doing our best, but..."

"No buts sir...we have to find her."

Alain nodded but the weariness and strain showed through in his face. "Oui, we shall. Keep talking to 'er and let us know anyzing zat changes, anyzthing zat can give us a clue."

Harry nodded in return. He looked over at Hermione who glanced up at him. She was sitting next to Sirius. He'd been dying to know what had happened in Harry's escape but knew Harry was too concerned about Gabrielle to give an accounting of the events. Hermione had taken over explaining what had occurred.

"...And so we were concerned that Voldemort might be able to see through the invisibility cloak and Dobby would get killed." Hermione was explaining to Sirius. "Dobby was more than willing to go anyway," Hermione continued, "but then when Harry mentioned the

phoenix song he heard, it occurred to us that if Dobby carried Fawkes, it would provide the perfect distraction."

"That's a memory I want to see." Sirius said. "I want to see the look on old snake-face when Harry beat him."

"Are you sure? Do you really want to see Harry being tortured?" Hermione shuddered as she could feel the effects of that curse again.

"You felt it?" Sirius asked as he noticed the change come over Hermione.

"Sort of. We can feel... certain things in the bond. Like a powerful echo of emotions and feelings. It's not the entire full effect but it was..." Hermione paused as she remembered the pain. "It was bad enough. Though I know it was much worse for Harry."

"Is he really alright?" Sirius asked as he glanced over at the person in question. Harry and Fleur were now sitting on the sofa holding hands.

"He's only focused on Gabrielle at the moment," Hermione explained. "We all are but it's easier to talk and not think about it..."

"I just wished there was something I could do to help find her." Sirius sighed. "I feel useless but I don't know this country or the language. I'd just get in the way more than I'd help."

Throughout the remainder of the day, as the sun sunk lower and lower toward the waters, the vigil continued. Harry, Fleur, and Hermione all were keeping Gabrielle company mentally.

"Zey aren't going to find me are zey?" Gabrielle's voice was tired and strewn with fear, panic and despair.

"They will, they have to angel." Harry replied. His eyes wandered to the windows and noticed the bottom of the sun now touched the waterline. "I'm sure it will be soon. Your father has people everywhere. Don't give up hope. Soon you'll be in my arms and I'm going to hold you and never let you go."

"I'd like zat." Gabrielle replied, "But if..."

"No buts," Harry cut her off. "While I'm holding you, we'll go down to the beach and we'll celebrate with fireworks, and...and..." Harry's words trailed off as he started another line of thought. "Fireworks." He repeated, this time it was out loud.

Fleur looked at her bondmate, a puzzled expression on her face.

"FIREWORKS!" Harry exclaimed again this time much louder, "Or something loud." Everyone was now looking at him strangely wondering if he had suffered more than he'd let on. Harry had an expression of excitement on his face as he continued. "Look, Gabrielle can hear everything around her so we just need to make sounds like fireworks or explosions or whatever near these places with fishing boats. As long as it's loud and identifiable she can tell us and we'll know she's close." Harry explained.

"But 'ow?" Fleur asked.

"We'll go," Hermione said. Her brain had kicked into gear as she looked at Fleur.

"Oui," Fleur replied when she realized what Hermione was thinking. "We can do zree teams. Each wiz one of us."

"And...and we leapfrog," Hermione added. "As soon as we know she is not at a certain location that person goes to the next while the next location is tested. Properly coordinated we could do three sites every five minutes or so."

"Eet won't work," Alain said sharply, dampening the enthusiasm. "Look." He ran his hand down the map. Over three zousand kilometers of coast land. We can't do it even with all of you setting off fireworks all night. Zere is just not enough time."

"But..." Hermione started to argue but an Auror rushed into the room at that time.

"Ma'am, sir we might 'ave somezing. One of our Auror trainees..."

*** E E ***

Alisha Bonnuet, age twenty-five, was sitting in a pub near the port in Lorient. She was picking up dinner for her and Marcus, her partner. As she waited for it to be prepared, she glanced up at the television that was turned to the local news. The current story was of a fire that was blazing in some city she hadn't caught the name of. The video showed what looked like an apartment building with several floors fully engulfed in flames. Alisha swallowed as old memories emerged. She subconsciously rubbed the circular scar tissue on her right hand. Scar tissue that was hidden under her current glamour charm but was still there and still could be felt.

Her mind took her back fourteen years earlier to a day, three days prior to her eleventh birthday when a similar fire had happened. Her name hadn't been Bonnuet then, but Matin. Alisha Matin had not had a happy childhood. She had been mistake. A mistake that was constantly thrown into every argument her mother and father had and they had a lot of them. As a child she'd felt like a wart on the body of the Matin family. A part of the body, but a part that they'd preferred not to have. Then of course there had been all the unexplainable things that seemed to occur around her. At the time she hadn't know she was a witch. In fact it would be several more years before the world of magic opened up to her.

Alisha again looked at the television screen and the fire that raged there mimicked the fire that had raged that night. She'd gone to bed while her mother and father argued once more. As she listened to them argue, again about her and every little thing that happened, she'd made a wish, or a curse. To this very day she still felt those words had cursed her parents. As she listened to their arguing voices she's muttered how she wished they'd burn in hell. Later that night she'd awoke to the sound of alarms in the streets below her window. Realizing she smelled smoke, she'd climbed out of bed in a panic. Smoke was coming from under her door. Fighting terror, she'd grabbed the doorknob and yanks as hard as she could. The doorknob had seared her palm as she'd grasped it, but she'd refused to let go as she pulled and pulled trying to get a door to open so she could escape her room.

Again Alisha rubbed the ridges of the scar tissue on her palm, circular, the exact shape of the doorknob of that room as again she felt the guilt that still coursed through her. That night her parents had died and Alisha felt it had been her wish, her curse that had caused it.

What she didn't know was the day after the fire an owl had tried to deliver an important envelope from the Beauxbatons Academy of Magic. Finding the residence destroyed, the owl had returned to the school. A school teacher had looked into the matter, but it had been a busy time, and when he'd been given incorrect information that no one had survived the fire, he solemnly updated the magical chronicle of their school that Alisha Matin, muggleborn witch, had died in a tragic accident. Alisha had become one of the few magical people that never get notified of who they really were.

Alisha had been placed in a foster home. They had been a nice young couple who truly seemed to love her. Everything was fine for a year and she'd been happy for the first time in her life, even to the point where she'd started using their last name, Bonnuet. But then the unexplained things had started again. First they tried to ignore them, but finally when Alisha had come home from school angry and every window in the house shattered, the Bonnuets could take no more. As much as they cared for the young girl, they feared her. Without explanation they gave up foster care of Alisha, returning her to the system.

For the next two years, she'd moved from foster home to foster home until finally she'd had enough. On her fourteenth birthday she taken the sparse amount of money she'd been given as a gift and ran away. That money had quickly run out and she'd found herself on the streets of Nice, cold and hungry. As she sat at a sidewalk table one evening ignoring the rain that fell, a man had found her and offered to buy her food. She'd gratefully accepted the food and later when he offered to provide her with a hotel room she again accepted, though warily. It was that night that she found out who she really was.

At the recollection of that night, Alisha smiled. She remembered him bringing out a small polished stick, his wand, she knew now. He'd planned on Imperiusing her, raping her and then leaving her with no memory of what had happened, but he'd been shocked to find his curse hadn't worked. The look on Marcus' face when she'd just asked him about the voice in her head that went away had been priceless.

"You..you're a witch." He'd proclaimed in shock all of those years ago.

Alisha had been more than upset to be called such a name and had got up and started putting what few clothes she had back into her bag preparing to leave, but he'd stopped her. Over the next couple of hours Marcus had explained and even shown her real magic. He'd even let her use his wand to do a simple test of her abilities. She'd stayed with him that night and the next few, along the way the young teenager had gladly given herself to the much older man. He showed her why her life had been the way it had been. And those explanations had set her mind free. Marcus on the other hand had realized the value of an unidentified underaged witch to his operations. Especially one that could throw off an Imperius curse without even trying. Marcus Knight was a smuggler, a very successful one at that.

They'd been inseparable from that day. He'd bought Alisha an untraceable wand and over the next few years taught her all the magic he could. She'd developed a ruthless streak unmatched in many of his rivals. She personally had captured twelve of the Veela they had sold in the last four years. She'd bribed, stolen and even killed without a single thought; the only regret she carried in her heart was of that night before she turned eleven. Her parents had not wanted her, but they had been her parents.

Alisha was brought out of her reverie by a tap on her shoulder. "Madam," A young man's voice said. "Madam, I apologize, but we are asking everyone if they have seen these people." The young man pushed a sheet of paper in front of Alisha.

Alisha had a good eye for people and instantly recognized the clean cut young man as a police officer, no...an Auror. She swallowed down her nervousness and then looked at the sheet of paper. On it were pictures of three people. One was of that Veela that was on the boat, one of Marcus and the last one was....one of her. Another picture even showed the burn that was on her hand.

"How did they get these pictures?" She thought as she acted like she was studying the pictures carefully. She was thankful Marcus had insisted she glamour herself for the trip out. Finally she looked back toward the young man and shook her head. "I'm sorry, no. Who are they?"

"The young lady was kidnapped by the two older people."

"Really," Alisha said. "Well I'll..." she paused as the food she'd ordered was brought to her. "I'll definitely keep my eye out for them. Who is she?"

"Daughter of some high-ranking official it seems, not quite positive."

Alisha eyes rose sharply to look at him. "High ranking official?" she thought. Then she waved the paper at the man. "Can I keep this?"

"Of course," the young Auror said. "Thank you for your time and have a good evening." He offered his hand for a handshake as he smiled at her.

Alisha returned the smile and started to lift her hand to grip his but then made a self-conscious jerk of her hand as she remembered her scarring and that it could be felt. She rose from her seat and put the money down to cover the bill. She then picked up her food and walked quickly out the door. Alisha didn't need to turn and looked to recognize the footsteps of the young auror following her.

Self conscious and nervous she walked outside where another young man seemed to be waiting, his hand also filled with the same sheets of picture covered paper. Alisha turned away from him and quickened her pace, but the man completely ignored her as he started talking to the man who followed her out.

"Find anything?" Alisha heard the second man ask.

"No," the first man answered with a sigh. "Guess we keep trying. I'll go there while you head for that restaurant down the street."

Alisha wasted no more time, she turned a corner and with a spin she was gone. Unfortunately with her nervousness she wasn't as careful as she should have been and left with a much louder crack than normal.

*** E E ***

Paul Durand, second year French Auror academy trainee was tired. He and his whole class had been turned out to search every nook and cranny of every city for a young girl who had been kidnapped. At first they'd had very little to go on except her picture. Later in the

day they were told it had been confirmed she was being held on a boat which was either a fishing boat or near a fishing fleet and it was part of a human smuggling ring. Finally they had been given pictures of the two people who were holding her. He and his partner were currently combing the bars and restaurants where the fishing crews normally spent their time in Lorient showing the picture of the kidnappers and the young girl to everyone hoping someone had seen something.

"No," he'd just replied to his partner. "Guess we keep trying. I'll go there." He nodded toward another bar, "while you head for that restaurant down the street."

He'd only walked three steps when he heard a familiar sound.

CRACK!

Paul knew it was an apparation, a careless one at that. He glanced to where the noise had come from and then looked around to make sure no muggles were close by to have witnessed it. He shook his head at the indiscreet witch or wizard who'd do such a thing so close to a muggle establishment. He had taken another step toward the next bar when he remembered the woman he'd last talked to had been walking in that direction. "Was she a witch?" He shrugged at his own question as he realized he had more important things to worry about than a witch apparating too close to a muggle establishment.

He'd taken two more steps when he remembered what the woman had been doing when he first saw her. She'd been running the finger of one hand on the palm of the other in a circular motion almost like she'd been tracing something, something that wasn't there. Then he remembered how she'd started to shake his hand and then stopped. Paul glanced down at the pictures on the sheets of paper in his hand.

"What is it Paul?" his partner asked. He seen the young auror trainee stop and then look down.

"Maybe nothing but..." Paul replied, but then he relayed to the other trainee what he'd seen. "What if she's glamoured? I mean the way she was tracing her palm." He pointed at the picture, "Exactly like the outline of that scar."

"That's a bit of a stretch isn't it?" His friend asked. "But I think I'd prefer to be wrong on the side of caution. Besides you did say she left in a hurry as soon as she saw those pictures. I think we should floo it in."

Paul nodded but as they walked toward the local floo, he hoped she hadn't been just a very hungry witch hurrying home.

** E E **

"Lorient?" Christelle asked as she looked down at the map. She cast a spell that enlarged that area and then sighed at the size of the port there. A boat could be almost anywhere within a five kilometer area. She now had not slept in almost two nights and her mind, even with Pepper-up potions was lagging. "Ze possibility zat a woman rubbing her palm? 'E zinks eet MIGHT be a glamour'd scar?" Christelle shook her head at the small chance this would amount to anything. The worst thing was this had been the best clue they'd had so far. She turned back to the Auror who had brought the news. "Fine, send some investigators zere, see if zey can uncover something."

"What about the the young people's idea." Alain suggested. "We could set off fireworks. Zat would allow us to cover a wide area and quickly find out if my daughter is zere."

Madam Arceneau looked at Alain and then back down at the map. Finally she nodded. "It definitely can't hurt. I'll arrange it."

** E E **

"I 'EAR ZEM!" Gabrielle mentally shouted as she heard small pops and bigger explosions in the distance. Even a glance out of the window showed various colors of red and green. "I 'ear ze fireworks."

Harry felt a huge amount of relief flood through him. "We'll come get you now, just hang on angel."

"She can hear them," Harry said to Christelle and Alain. "She's there."

The entire atmosphere of the room lifted at once. Smiles appeared on faces that hadn't seen one in hours.

"I'll go and coordinate zis from zere Minister," Madam Arceneau said to Alain. "We'll find 'er now."

"I'm coming as well Christelle," Alain said. "I want to be zere."

Apolline and the teens each added they would go as well.

"Stay 'ere," Alain said. "I'll bring 'er back when we 'ave 'er."

"No, sir," Harry replied in a very determined voice. "I need to be there sir. You need me anyway. What if something comes up?"

"I can take Fleur," Alain said. "You've been zrough too much today, you and 'Ermione. We'll let you know what's 'appening."

"Sir, Gabrielle needs me," Harry insisted. "She's the one who's been through the most and I will be there when she's found."

"I'm going too, sir," Hermione added.

Alain looked at the determination in the young man's eyes and nodded. "Very well, but you must stay with ze people we 'ave protecting you."

"I'll take care of them, sir," Sirius said. "Just get us near there."

"I can help," Tonks added. "That way you don't have to give up any of your local Aurors."

"What about you, Marl?" Alain asked his old friend.

"I'd prefer to go in and deal with the slavers, but if you want me to watch them I can," the man said.

"Please my old friend," Alain replied. "I'd feel better knowing I don't have worry about zem." Once Marl had nodded, he turned to the teens, "Get warmer clothes on, it will be chilly in Lorien. Also 'ave food prepared, it might take a while to find 'er."

"I'll have Winky get the food," Hermione volunteer and called the house-elf. By the time they had their warmer clothes on, Winky had prepared enough food to feed them for a couple of weeks.

"Winky wants Winky's Gabi back," The little elf said. "Gabi was the one who wanted Winky first."

"We'll bring her back," Harry promised the elf.

*** E E ***

"Marcus," Alisha called when she walked onto the boat. It was a common practice to apparate into an area away from the boat and walk the rest of the way. That way the sound of apparation would not draw attention to the boat nor would there be a trail directly to them either.

"Oui?"

"We have a problem," Alisha said as she thrust the paper into her partner's hand. "They have our pictures, even my scar." She quickly explained what had happened.

"Any reason to suspect they recognized you?"

"Non," Alisha admitted. "It was only a kid, probably still in training."

For several long seconds Marcus stared over the railing of the boat toward the docks where the bar was located. The area was well lit in street lights but he couldn't see anything of concern.

"Nothing is happening."

I still don't like it though," Alisha Bonnuet continued. "How did they get our pictures?"

Marcus shrugged. "I don't know, but it is troubling." His eyes were still focused on the far shore.

"Think we should leave now?"

"No, but keep an eye out. If anything happens we'll leave then, but I think if they knew where we were, they wouldn't be passing our pictures out in bars. We haven't been off the ship unglamoured, so I don't think we have anything to worry about." He shook his head.

"But it does mean we'll have to rethink coming back here. As for now though, I'm going below and eat some of that food you bought."

Twenty minutes later the night sky above the port illuminated in a brilliant display of fireworks. "Damn," Alisha muttered to herself. "All we need is someone calling attention to this area."

Marcus reappeared a couple of minutes later and looked up at the continuing lights of the bursting rockets. "A day late in their celebration aren't they?" He asked. As he continued his gaze into the night sky, he reached into a pocket and brought out a pack of cigarettes. He tapped one out without even looking and after lighting it he took a long drag. Soon the fireworks disappeared and silence once again descended into the moonlit night.

"Something isn't right Marcus," Alisha said. "It doesn't feel right. We really should leave now."

"Relax, it was just some kids playing around," replied her partner. He leaned on the rail and lifted his right hand with the cigarette in it to his lips and inhaled. As the smoke left his mouth he shrugged. "They are all the way over near the fishing boats anyway." He took another drag from his cigarette.

For the next couple of minutes they continued to gaze across the water.

"Look," Alisha said pointing at a group of individuals on the dock area of the fishing boats. They were moving in a way that allowed concealment from the people who might be on the boats. "Those aren't kids are they?"

"No..." This time a flick and the cigarette went over the side to extinguish itself in the waters below. All they needed was a glowing cigarette making a light that catches someone's eyes. He glanced up at the sky wishing the moon wasn't quite so bright as well. A slight wavering of a star caught his attention and he glanced at it, then another wavered and another. He was about to look back at the docks when he realized it was happening in a straight line. That forced him to concentrate harder on what he was seeing. He then noticed another set of stars doing the same thing, again in straight line that curved back ever so often. "Damn, there's something up

there. Disillusioned I think. Brooms probably." He nodded toward to the area where he had seen the distortion.

"Where...oh..." Alisha saw it then. "The kids who set off the fireworks?"

"No." They could now hear voices from across the water. The fishing boats were coming alit one by one as the men they had seen on the docks started to board them. "They are searching for something and if those are brooms up there, that means those people are probably Aurors."

"Do you really think they know we're here?"

"I'm not sure I want to stick around and find out." Marcus looked up again, trying to find the distorted stars or hear the sound of a broom in motion, but he could no longer find them.

"I think I'll apparate over and see if I can hear anything," Alisha said and started to move away.

Marcus grabbed her arm and stopped her. "No. There are too many of them. If you go in too loud, you'll be caught."

"We're just going to sit here?"

Marcus pulled out another cigarette forgetting why he tossed his other one away and lit it. As he took another long drag he kept watch across the port. After a minute he finally shook his head. "No, we should leave. Go a few blocks away and then apparate back to the apartment. See if it's being watched."

Alisha reappeared less than five minutes later, slinking back aboard the boat quietly. "Anti-apparation wards are up. I was almost discovered. There are Aurors everywhere. I think they have muggle-repelling wards up on the streets as well. We'll definitely not get that thing off the boat from here."

A few quiet curses escaped Marcus' lips as he tried to figure out where they'd slipped up. He stared back out at the water and he noticed something strange. "They aren't stopping any of the boats that are currently moving. If they really knew we were here, wouldn't they be searching every boat?"

"I'm sure they'll get to it once they finish with those fishing boats or they'll come over here.

"Maybe," Marcus replied. Over the next few minutes he studied the far shore looking for any patterns to what was going on. Still no moving ships were being searched.

Finally he looked out toward the sea before he turned back to Alisha. "Be ready to cast off. They can't extend those wards that far out. We should be able to make a run for it. If they aren't stopping moving ships, we should be alright."

"What about if they attack boats that start moving?"

"We do still have that Veela they seemed to want so badly."

Alisha shrugged as she moved toward the lines and pulled out her wand.

"No, no magic." Marcus said. "Nothing that will draw attention to us."

Alisha looked annoyed but put her wand away. She looked expectantly at her partner who was watching the far side, waiting.

"What are we waiting for?"

"I'm still worried about those brooms up there. I'm hoping....yes there they go." On the far side two of the fishing boats started moving. Yells could be heard, even a red beam as a stunner was seen going from the docks to the boats moving more quickly now.

"Guess that answers the question about boats moving, but hopefully we aren't seen." Marcus said as he slid a small piece of metal into a slot on his boat panel. There was a rune on the metal that completed a series creating an undetectable silencing charm on his engine compartment. He'd paid a lot of money to have that installed, especially in a way to not interfere with the engines running. He then cranked the engines and smiled as he felt the vibrations and saw the gauges indicating they were running smoothly. He knew the propellers on the water would make some sounds, but that should only be a negligible amount as long as they went slow.

Marcus slowly maneuvered the boat out of the slip and started to inch his way out to the open sea. He planned to hug the coastline as much as he could in anticipation that the outline of his boat merged into the background lights. They had just cleared their dock area when a loud high-pitched noise started. Marcus glanced toward the dock area where it had seemed to come from. He couldn't see what was making the noise, but he knew it was moving and moving incredibly fast.

Below, in the cabin, Gabrielle was lying on her bunk when she felt the vibrations as the engine started and the slight movement as the boat moved out from its slip.

"HARRY WE'RE MOVING!" Gabrielle mentally shouted to her bondmate.

*** E E ***

When Harry, Hermione, and Fleur as well as their guards of Sirius, Tonks, and Marl arrived in Lorient, they were directed to a building that had windows facing the water. Madam Arceneau had set up a command center in the building. When they entered, they could see her standing over a map detailing the area and was directing responses.

"How will they find her?" Harry asked as he looked out the window. Lights from many sources pinpointed the port giving an indication of just how large the area was. Across the water were more lights and more boats and ships.

"Standard procedures would be to put up anti-apparation and portkey wards, muggle-repelling wards on the streets surrounding the area to prevent further confusion," Marl explained. "That allows them to know that if anyone is walking the streets, they are magical. After that, they'll start inspecting the boats. It'll take time, but no one's going anywhere tonight."

Ten minutes, twenty, then a half hour passed. It was extremely frustrating to Harry to be so close to Gabrielle but still have no idea where she was. "Well?" He asked the senior inspector who was really showing the fatigue she felt.

"Monsieur Potter, we are doing everyzing we can, but eet is a very large place. Eet will take time."

"Ma'am what about sounds?" Hermione asked. "Like the fireworks. We know Gabrielle can hear things. We could use the doppler effect and find her that way."

"What is ze doppler effect?"

"Muggle science term." Hermione replied. "You know when something making a sound changes the way it sounds when it's getting closer and again as it moves away?"

"Oui, so what are you suggesting?"

"Get someone on a broom and make a steady loud noise. As the noise changes to Gabrielle we should be able to pinpoint her location."

"I can do it," Harry said. "In fact, it would have to be me since we'd need to know the exact instant the sound starts to shift."

"I can go as well," Fleur said.

"Non, I cannot permit either of you to go. Eet would be too dangerous," Christelle replied. "We have people on brooms and as soon as zey land we can do somezing."

"But.."

"NON," Christelle erupted this time. "I will not 'ave you captured or worse, Monsieur Potter. We already 'ave enough problems. I 'ave over a 'undred and fifty trained Aurors around zis port. Let us do our jobs s'il te plait. We WILL find 'er."

Harry stared at her for another five seconds and then gave her a curt nod. He then turned and walked back to the window and stared out.

"You're planning on going anyway, aren't you?" Hermione asked as she walked over to stand next to him.

"Why would you think that?" Harry asked trying to sound innocent.

Hermione glanced at him with a smile. "Besides the fact I can read your thoughts, I've seen that look in your eyes more than once before. Just be careful. Take Fleur with you."

"I need my Firebolt."

"Dobby can get through the anti-apparation wards at Hogwarts and also was able to get in our tent. I'm sure he can do the same here."

"Can we get out of here?"

"Leave that to Fleur and me."

"How?" Harry asked but Hermione had already started.

Hermione gave a loud yawn. "I'm sleepy."

"Sleepy? When we're about rescue Gabrielle? Well go 'ome zen," Fleur replied in an angry voice. "You don't 'ave stay 'ere. It isn't like Gabrielle is your sister."

"WHAT?" Hermione responded indignantly. "IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK? OF COURSE I CARE."

"Of course you DON'T care what 'appens to 'er," Fleur spat. "How could you be zinking of sleep if you were worried?"

"I...I DO CARE!"

"GIRLS!" Madam Arceneau exclaimed sharply as she looked up from her map. "Stop arguing. It's been a long night and tempers are bit short."

Fleur glared at Hermione and then spun on her heels and walked out the door.

"Follow her," Hermione directed Harry.

Harry stared at Hermione for a second and then caught on. "FLEUR WAIT!" He yelled at the closing door and dashed out of it.

A block away, Fleur ducked into an alley and Harry followed.

"Dobby!" Harry said and an instant later the little elf was beside him.

"Bon joy. What can Dobby do for Harry Potter sir?"

"Can you get my Firebolt and my cloak out of my trunk?"

"Ave Winky bring my 'eavier cloak," Fleur added. "Eet will be colder up zere."

"That won't be necessary," A female voice said from behind them.

Harry and Fleur spun around to find themselves looking at Tonks, Sirius and Marl.

"Nice argument, but I spent too much time in that chamber to fall for it." Sirius said with a smirk.

"Guess you're going to try to make us go back in there?" Harry asked. "If you are, save your breath. I'm not going."

"Nope," Tonks replied. "But Fleur won't need her cloak because I'll be going with you."

"What?"

"It's a good idea," Sirius said with a shrug. "We need to find Gabrielle soon. The Aurors won't go unnoticed too long and eventually the bad guys might do something stupid if they feel trapped."

"And you?" Harry asked Marl. "You don't think I should just run away?"

"Kid, this isn't about fighting Death Eaters, this is about saving someone you love. Just don't be stupid, stay in the air and only fight if you have to."

Dobby was back within three minutes with the Firebolt and the invisibility cloak.

"Find 'er," Fleur said to Harry as he put his invisibility cloak over him and the broom. It wasn't large enough to cover Tonks as well, so she was going to disillusion herself.

She turned to Tonks. "And you take care of my...of 'Arry."

"Of course. Wouldn't be any fun later bragging about how I'd ridden Harry's broomstick with his fiancée's permission if I let anything happen to him would it?" Tonks replied with a wink.

"Tonks!" Fleur said.

"Don't worry, I won't mention how much thrust it has when Harry's really putting his best effort into it."

"TONKS!"

Tonks grinned and tapped herself on the head and slowly disillusioned herself.

"Love," Fleur started to Harry. "Could you make sure Tonks has a GOOD ride?"

"Now," Tonk's voice said. "Where shall I hold onto?"

"You mention 'olding onto 'is wand and I'll make sure 'e drops you in ze ocean," Fleur replied. "But I would suggest you 'old on real tight..."

"WH...AWWWWWWW" The last sound disappeared into the night as Harry guided his Firebolt into the sky at full acceleration.

When they were aloft, Tonks pulled out her wand and started a spell that emitted an ear splitting noise.

"HARRY, WE'RE MOVING!" Gabrielle yelled a couple of minutes later.

Harry looked down at the port and could see two boats had pulled away from the docks. Aurors were sending stunning spells after them trying to make them stop. He suddenly felt a whoosh of air pass him as another disillusioned broom swept passed him headed for the escaping boats.

Harry spun his broom and descended rapidly toward the boats as well. "We're coming. Can you hear the noise?"

"Oui, but it's faint." Gabrielle replied. "Like you're far away."

"It's not those boats Harry," Hermione said. "You're right over them." She could see through Harry's eyes and knew exactly where he was in relation to the moving boats. "She has to be somewhere else."

Harry turned his broom in a sweeping arc and started out toward the sea. "Let me know when the noise gets louder," he instructed Gabrielle.

"Oui, 'Ermione and Fleur 'ave already told me," Gabrielle replied. "It's a little louder, non...now it's getting fainter."

Harry realized he needed landmarks to fly toward or he'd just keep flying over the same area. He noticed an island in the middle of the port waters and started toward it.

"It's getting louder...louder...going away now."

"Further north Harry, your....right." Hermione instructed.

Again and again Harry sped over the waters until he noticed a boat that was barely moving in the water near the far shore. He shot in that direction.

"Louder...louder... VERY LOUD." The last Gabrielle had said as they were directly over the boat Harry had seen. "Now it's going away."

Harry inverted his broom and looped toward the ground in a maneuver most commonly called a barrel roll. He and Tonks were pressed firmly into the cushioning charm that protected them from the hardwood handle of the broom as he accelerated even faster into the downward arc, pulling up a bare ten meters from the water.

"Coming back now..louder...VERY LOUD AGAIN." Again he was right over the boat.

"We know where you are angel. Hold on." Harry told Gabrielle as he slowed his broom and tapped Tonks' leg. "She's down on that boat."

"KEEP FLYING...AWAY!" Tonks instructed him.

"WHY?"

"We don't want them to think we suspect she is there."

Harry started the broom back up to speed and then let Fleur and Hermione know.

"Papa and Madam Arceneau say to come back. Zey're preparing a team of Aurors to bring 'er back," Fleur said. "Zey are not 'appy you didn't obey, but are 'appy it..."

"Arry," Gabrielle said very nervously overlapping Fleur. "I just 'eard zem talking outside zis room. Zey are scared. Ze woman...she zinks it would be best to kill me and escape to shore. She said to leave ze boat for ze Aurors to chase while zey escape."

"Hold on," Harry said to Tonks. "And stop that spell on your wand."

"WHAT? WHY?"

"We have an angel to rescue," Harry said as again he executed another barrel roll, this time coming out of it only five feet above the water, headed directly back toward the boat. Harry pushed his Firebolt faster than he ever had before. They were leaving a small trail in the water behind them now. The boat was ahead and so was his Gabrielle. It only took ten seconds to cover the distance, but each of them felt like an eternity. The boat was now stopped. Harry brought the broom into a landing in the darkest spot he could on the boat.

"JUST KILL HER AND GET UP HERE!" a female voice said as they could hear noises on the steps. "I'LL START THE BOAT BACK UP AND PREPARE THE RAFT."

Neither Harry nor Tonks could understand what was being yelled since it was in French but Gabrielle gave Harry a terrified translation.

Harry didn't hesitate when Gabrielle finished; he sent a blasting hex at the controls of the boat.

"What did you do that for?" Tonks hissed. "Now they know we're here."

"Yes," Harry quickly relayed what was said to Tonks. "Now they won't kill her since they think they need a hostage."

"Ok, good thinking," Tonks replied as she looked around. "I'll go after Gabrielle; you see if you can stop the woman."

"No," Harry argued. "I'll get Gabrielle. I can talk to her remember. You get the woman."

"MARCUS, get up here. We have company," the female voice said. "Bring that thing with you."

Again Gabrielle explained what was said.

"You just get to Gabrielle," Tonks said as she glanced around the corner and could just make out the woman crouching behind a metal extrusion. Tonks cursed as she recognized the feeling of the revelio charm that passed through her.

"I know you're there. Right behind that wall," The woman said. "Come out peacefully and I might let you live or at least die quickly."

"You mean me?" A blonde haired young girl asked as she walked out from behind the wall with her arms raised in the air. "Don't hurt me?"

"How did you get unsilenced and out of that cabin?" Alisha asked. "Who freed you?" She knew her partner must be dead or at least captured for the Veela to be free. Alisha glanced around nervously, expecting to see Aurors. She was confused why her spell only showed the one person. "At least with her, I'd have a chance to negotiate." She darted from behind her protection and toward the young blonde girl. In the dim light, she didn't notice her clothes were different.

Tonks, disguised as Gabrielle smiled to herself as she ducked back into the darkness behind the wall and pulled out her wand.

"HARRY!" Gabrielle cried out. "He's...he's going to kill me."

Harry had been moving cautiously but at that he rushed toward the steps. Just as he got there, the door to the cabin burst open and a man stood there. He had Gabrielle in front of him with an ugly knife poised at her throat.

At that moment a serious of crashes could be heard on deck.

"WHAT'S GOING ON ALISHA?" the man called. When he didn't hear anything he called out. "SHOW YOURSELVES OR I'LL KILL HER."

"I'm right in front of you Gabrielle, can you do anything?"

Harry could see her try to wiggle, but the man firmed his grip. A small drop of blood appeared at the tip of the knife. "Détiennent encore."

"Non," Gabrielle replied nervously.

The knife moved again. "SHOW YOURSELVES!" Marcus yelled again in French and again translated to Harry.

Harry quickly pulled off the cloak to reveal himself. "Let her go."

"Harry, aurors are taking off now," Hermione said.

"NO!" Harry replied. "I think he'll kill her if they show up."

"An english kid?" Marcus scoffed. "What are you doing on my boat?"

"She's my girlfriend," Harry nodded toward Gabrielle. "I...I just want you to let her go. You can go where ever you want, just let her go."

"Non, I'm sure ze Aurors will be 'ere soon," Marcus said. "As zis creature is my way to escape. Who's wiz you?"

"Uh...no one. I...I flew my broom here. I...I just wanted Gabrielle."

"ALISHA!" the man called. When no answer came he started toward Harry slowly with Gabrielle still firmly in his arm. "Back away kid. You try anyzing stupid and she will die and zen you will."

"If she dies, you'll be dead right behind her," Harry replied as he kept his eyes on the man.

"I don't zink so. Now get out of my way."

Harry backed away but kept a firm grip on his wand.

"ALISHA!" the man called again.

"Yeah, 'ad to deal wiz anoizzer one," Alisha said sounding hoarse as she kept a hand on her throat. "Bitch 'it me in ze zroat and I couldn't breathe. She was ze only one."

The man said something in French and kicked a small inflatable boat which Gabrielle told Harry that it was 'Get the raft ready."

Harry took a step forward and raised his wand. "No, leave her here."

"I wouldn't do zat kid," Marcus said. "Who are you anyway?"

"I'm Harry Potter," Harry replied.

"Zat's interesting," He glanced at Alisha and smiled. "Ee might be a better 'ostage zan zis zing. Take 'im."

Alisha raised her wand and pointed it at Harry, "STUPFY" the sound was rough and nothing happened, but Harry didn't wait any longer and dove out of the way behind the wall.

Alisha grabbed her throat. "Can't..."

"Here, you take her then. I'll get the boy." Marcus said in French. Alisha eyes grew wide but when Marcus shoved Gabrielle toward her, she pulled out the knife on her belt and wrapped her own arm around the young Veela.

Harry eyed the two slavers from around the corner. He wanted to kill them both but didn't dare. "Let her go." He yelled.

Alisha pulled Gabrielle in front of her and lifted her knife but then as Gabrielle's hair blocked her face from Marcus, gave the slightest of winks at Harry.

"Get out 'ere boy or she'll die," Marcus instructed him.

"TONKS!" A wave of understanding passed over Harry. "Gabrielle, the woman is Tonks. Don't worry."

"What is she doing?"

"I don't know but wait." Harry replied. Alisha moved her head slightly toward Marcus and Harry hoped he understood. "OK...just don't hurt her." He called and walked out from behind the wall with his wand lowered but still firmly in his hand.

"Smart kid," The man sneered. "Now get..." He stopped because a movement from Alisha and Gabrielle caught his eye. That small amount of inattention was all Harry needed. His wand was up instantly, "CONFRIGO!" The blasting spell hit true on the man. The slight turn of his body was what saved his life as the spell hit his arm instead of his body. His elbow instantly turned to pulp as his wand fell to the deck still clutched in his hand.

Tonks/Alisha quickly pulled Gabrielle away from the man while at the same time tossing away the wand she had in her hand and pulled out a different one, her own wand.

"Hold it! I'm an English Auror, get on the deck now," Tonks commanded as she started to change back into herself.

Marcus could only stand in shock looking at the ruins of his arm. His eyes lifted to gaze at Harry and then he slowly turned his gaze toward his partner waiting for her to kill the kids and then come help him. But as his eyes found hers, they weren't the eyes of Alisha, they now belonged to someone else entirely; someone with pink hair who was telling him to get on the deck. His mouth opened to say something, but he couldn't find anything to say. He slowly sunk to the deck, his mind still in total confusion. Then he noticed the boy advancing on him with his wand raised. Pure fury poured from his eyes.

"NO Harry," Tonks said sharply. "I've got him." She bent over the man and started doing emergency medical spells to stop the flow of blood. "I should just let you bleed out you creep, but I have a feeling that you will not enjoy the rest of your life this way. No wand arm? In

prison? I'm sure the Minister will make sure you are put in the deepest hole he can find."

Marcus eyes were now looking down toward the deck. His wand was there still clutched in the hand that use to be his. He felt nausea overcome him and he spewed his late night food all over the deck.

"It's over, we got them." Harry told Fleur and Hermione as he pulled Gabrielle into his arms. The bands that secured her were still in place and as he didn't know how to get them loose. "I have you love."

"Unsilence me." She instructed.

"Sorry," Harry replied as he raised his wand and a second later his bondmate's lovely voice came.

"I knew you'd come 'Arry. You're my 'ero."

"I'll always do my best love, but I think it's Tonks who needs the thanks for this one."

Tonks looked up. "Sorry it took me that long to get back to you. But had to.." she looked down at the clothes she wore, "...get that bitch's clothes off and put them on. Then I couldn't do a damn thing with her wand. Felt like slime in my hand, but I couldn't risk him not recognizing her not having the correct wand."

Suddenly the boat was surrounded by Aurors on brooms. It wasn't long before the bands that secured Gabrielle were off and she had her arms around her bondmate. "I love you, 'Arry Potter."

The boat was propelled magically back toward the dock where everyone was. As it docked, Marcus and Alisha were led toward the ramp.

"Wait," Gabrielle said. Though Harry had offered to bring Gabrielle back on his Firebolt, Alain and Christelle had sent word for them to stay on the boat and risk no further danger. Now Gabrielle walked over to the man and woman who had threaten to sell her into slavery and to kill her.

"Zere are no words to describe ze filth you are," Gabrielle said. "My fazzer will make sure you live a very, very miserable life."

"Shut up, you..." The last of what Marcus was going to say was cut off by the rapidly ascending foot that hit the man between his legs. The crunching sound brought grimaces to every man who witnessed the event and only being held by two Aurors kept Marcus on his feet.

Alain had boarded the boat in time to see what happened. "Maybe a gender changing potion? Silenced and sold to ze same people 'e was going to sell you to?"

"You...you can't," Marcus wheezed through the pain that existed between his legs. "Zere are..." Unfortunately by turning his head to look at Minister Delacour, he didn't see Gabrielle's foot rising once more. The second blow caused a very effective form of silencing charm without the use of a wand.

"Oui, zere are laws and we can't do such zings in France, but if I was a betting man, I'd bet you've broken similar laws in ozzer countries? Some of which aren't nearly as 'nice' as we are." Alain looked at the man and woman one last time and then directed the Aurors to take them away. He then pulled his daughter into a hug. "I'm sorry, my dear," he murmured. "I was trying to protect you and it went wrong."

"Eets alright Papa," Gabrielle said. "Arry was zere."

"Yes 'e was," Alain said as he looked at the black-haired young man. "Son, I hope you know zat I can never describe my gratitude and my love. Ze day my daughters brought you into our family, was a day of blessing."

Harry blushed and shrugged. "I...I just did what I had to do sir."

"Eet is 'ow you define, 'what you 'ave to do' zat makes you special."

Then Fleur and Hermione were there. The bondmates were all in tears as they welcomed the rescue of Gabrielle.

It was another hour before they could return to the Delacour estate, but finally Harry pulled Gabrielle into his arms in the large bed that

night. Exhausted, the two of them clutched each other close and quickly fell into a deep slumber.

A/N: Should get them back to England and announcing the bond next chapter.

Chp45